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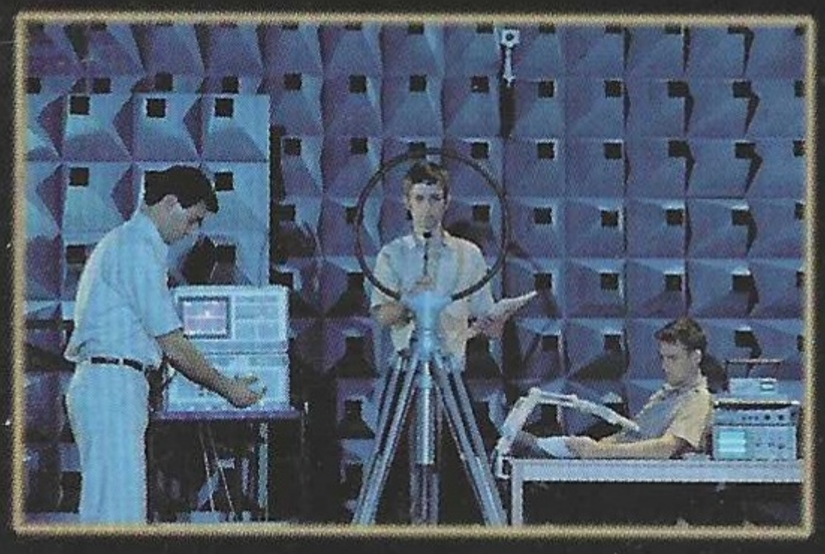
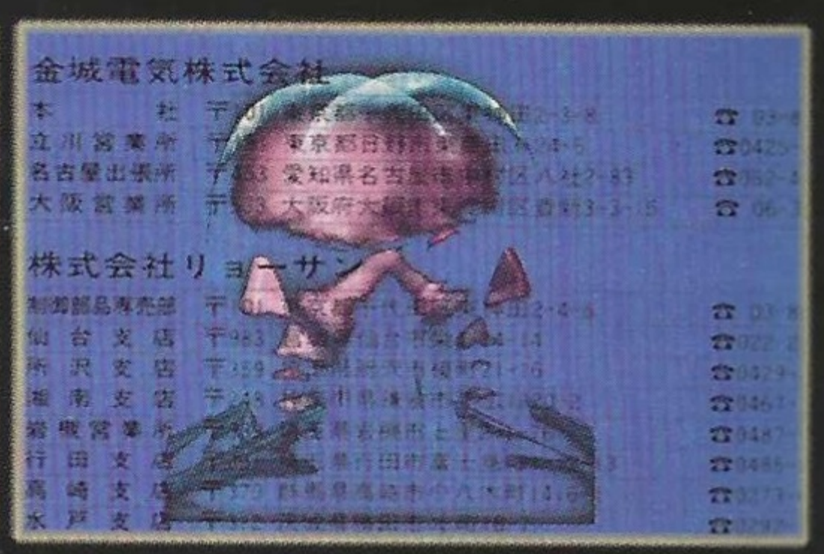
ELECTRONIC MUSIC + WIRED CULTURE





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FEB/MAR.2001

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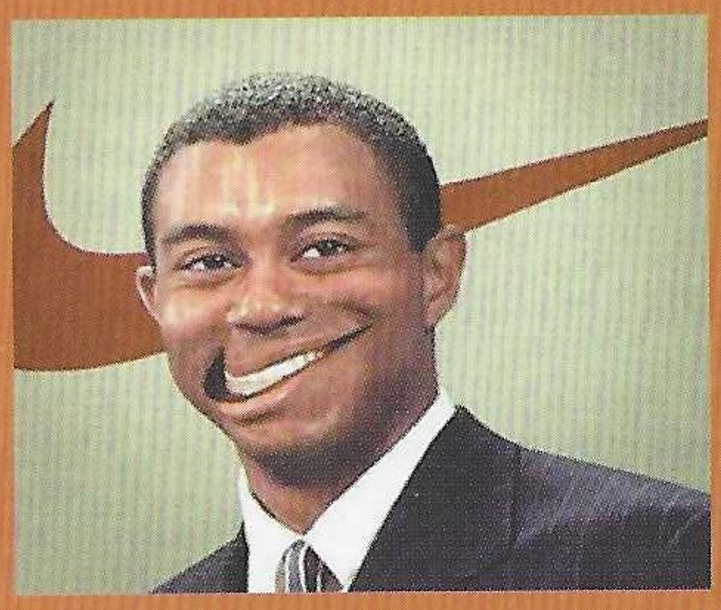

Happy New Year.

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ROBERT HOOD
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PREACHERS
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PHOTEK

Clocking in as one of last year's finest electronic albums, PHOTEK's 'Solaris' met with as much suprise as it did critical acclaim. Rupert Parkes takes stock of his junglistic success and tells Overload why the future's brighter than ever.

We live in musically complacent times, for sure. The Nineties threw up a barrage of innovative musical developments and styles and the result is a new era of 'cooking pot' music - artists aspire to blend a hint of house, a drop of jungle, a rasher of rock - all in one tune. When the musical historians look back on the late Nineties and early Noughties, they will probably regard it as a necessary evil, the end of tribalism in favour of immature multi-culturalism. As people find their way to new pastures guided by technology and the wealth of inspiration the current open-minded attitude inspires, it seems we are lacking in distinctly 'classic' music and that leaves us with a significant problem; where are the legendary musicians? The benchmarks for us to look back at and compare to, what will be, modern sounds. Tunes we'll hear on the radio and be able to tell our kids, "I remember buying that the day it came out" the way our folks can with Led Zeppelin, Captain Beefheart, John Coltrane, and such. Artists who may not always receive mass popular recognition in their era but who, with time, grow increasingly vital to the future of music... But of course, there are such artists today - and I have one of them on the end of the phone right now. Forgive me if I sound nervous, but I'm talking to Photek...

As it turns out Rupert Parkes is genial, informative and more than willing to speak his mind until I decide he's probably had enough. Given that this is the man who has recently released one of the classic albums of our time, 'Solaris', and was largely responsible for keeping jungle the most innovative musical form during its infancy, I'm excited by the chance to get opinions from a leader on what went wrong now that modern Jungle is basically, as we both joke, 'the new gabba'. It's like grilling Karl Marx over what went wrong with Communism:

"It's got less and less sincere over time. The best year was '96 - jungle was at the cutting edge of music. I think it just got to a point where you just had people banging out tracks to get a bit of cash and thinking short term... y'know; 'we'll put out fifty tunes this year that just go "Neoow Neoow" [does impression of bad analogue b-line]. They thought they were cashing in but they just lost everybody's interest."

So is there a point in time when things did start to get dull for the increasingly dark Jungle scene? When I put forward the idea that the emergence of the No-U-Turn crew as the innovators of the scene in '96 both created the most exciting period of Jungle's development and also sounded the death-bell as well, Rupert doesn't hold back with his criticism of DJs for sticking to a sound that gets an unavoidable, if mindless, dance-floor reaction. "I think that the DJ and dub-plate culture is the biggest thing to blame for the dip in quality control. DJs are only playing records that get an obvious response. So you may play a deep house set that people will sway and bob around to and it will change their lives - or you may hear an absolute full-on attack of warped noises that'll make people scream and bang their heads against the wall and then they'll never look back on it. Basically they wanted a release at that point and this is music that will have no effect further than that. If you're a DJ it looks like they loved it because they're going mad, but that doesn't mean the people are buying the music. They'd rather spend their money on good drugs and clothes and then just go wild".

Perhaps there is something ironic about criticising modern jungle for having nothing more than an immediate hedonistic appeal. After all, this is the music form that carried on the flame of good-time integration that rave inspired. But during the mid-nineties there was more experimentation in DJ sets, and that was part of the fun. DJs had to drop all manner of styles; from jazz to ragga to house to sci-fi - because, as with garage today, people from all different cultures were going out to hear what the different possibilities within the genre were. So is the innovator going to return to the style that made his name? "I've got a few jungle tunes that I'm going to be releasing on my label and that's keeping my foot in the door, because that's where I'm coming from and I want to keep contributing. But with the stuff I'm working on now, it's like anything's possible. I really feel like with 'Solaris' I broke the invisible barrier that keeps a lot of artists constrained to one thing. I feel totally rejuvenated and full of enthusiasm to make more music."

'Solaris' is certainly a major achievement for an artist who admits that he had got to a point where his music had become too much like a science. Was the seminal 'U.F.O.' a turning point? There was a lot of fuss made about the fact Rupert apparently took six months over the production. "I think that was when I was totally happy with how I was doing beats and I think that if I had carried on down that path I could've just been doing lab tests and mathematical theories instead of music. I don't want to labour away, I want to go back to the spirit of when I'd just worked out how my sampler worked. I want to have fun making music instead of it being a task. With 'Solaris' if something sounded laboured on, I'd just scrap it immediately"

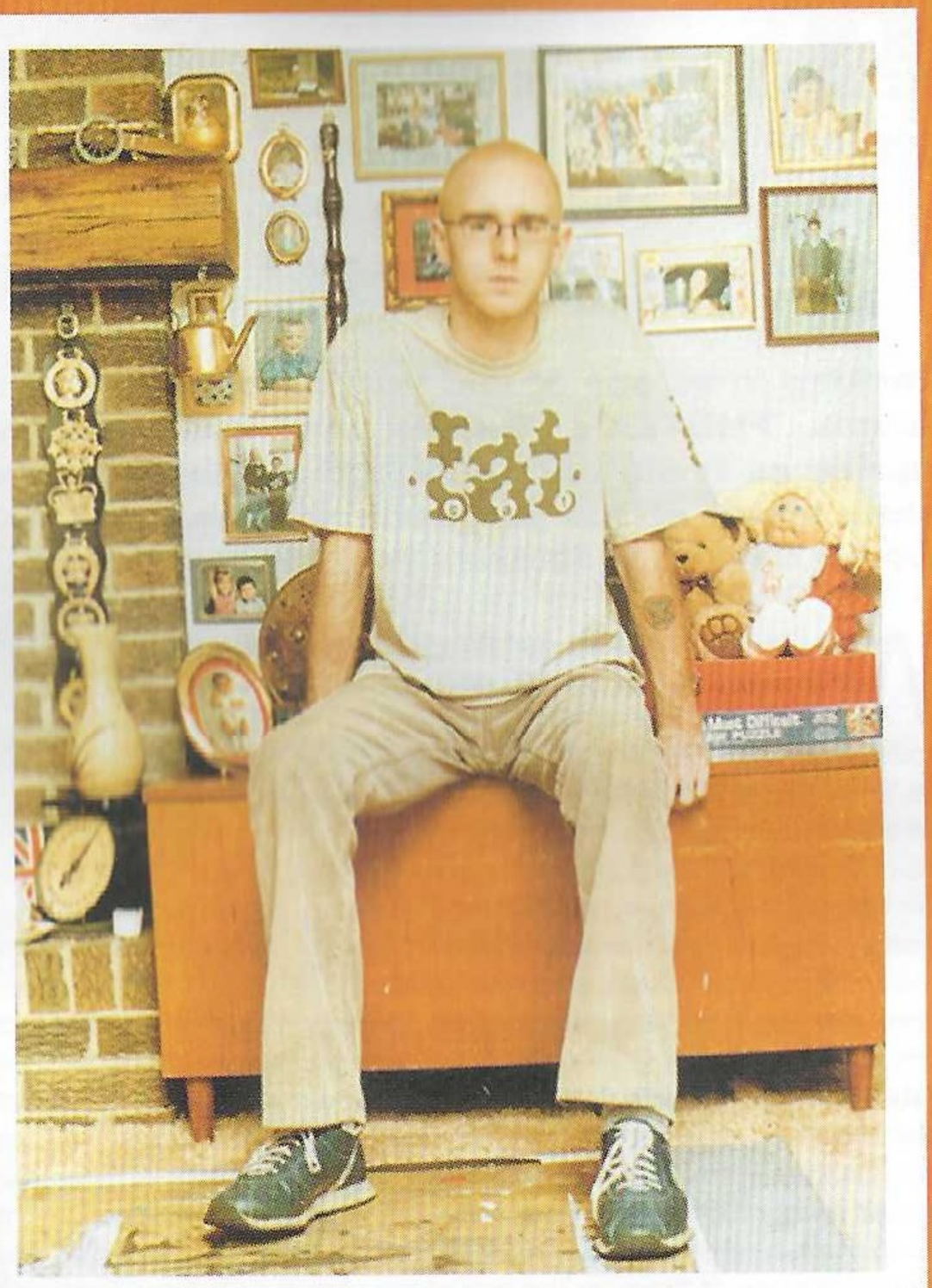
Still, 'Solaris' is totally Photek. It's almost as if he's reverse-engineered the music from his previous style. The Photek atmosphere, a fusion of funk and melody that permeates the imagination like a great novel, shines like the tropical artwork that adorns the album's sleeve. It's not a million miles away from earlier releases like 'The Water Margin' or 'T.Raenon': "I think that's right. A lot of people reacted like, 'Woah!', which was understandable but I don't think it's got that much of a different atmosphere to my other stuff. If you know me, it's obvious it's me. It's got my signature all over it but in an unfamiliar form."

There's no doubt that Rupert Parkes will be a crucial musician until the day the world runs out of electricity. 'Solaris' has proved that he can branch out into any style with the same conviction and spirit that made him the most important figure in jungle. If you haven't got 'Solaris' yet, you're missing out on an album that has set a new, almost impossibly high standard for others to try and better. And if you think there may be a chance that this is the best he can do, it's not a belief Parkes shares: "I've yet to make ninety percent of the best music I'll ever make. I've only just begun."

'SOLARIS' by Photek is out now on Science Records

WORDS> Paul Gannaway

There are leaders and there are followers, but in the maturation of modern music there's no disputing the integral role of Canadian pioneer RICHIE HAWTIN. Back in the studio following his public inauguration in France of a ground-breaking new audio technology, one of the world's foremost electronic music producers unplugs from the machine to interface with Overload.



RICHIE HAWTIN

Richie Hawtin appears to have ridden a wave of excitement all the way back from Europe. "We were there to announce a new technology that John Acquaviva and I are involved with called 'Final Scratch," he enthuses. "It enables you to play any digital music file, not just Mp3s. It can be a whole wave file, a studio master. You control it with a turntable; you can scratch it, you can pitch it, you can stop it, backspin it." What, like a record? I ask. "It's a special record, it's a piece of hardware and its software; it's a three-way system." Huh? So, it's a record-shaped piece of hardware that allows DJs to manipulate any digital music file like a record? Well yes, actually. And together with Plus 8 collaborator John Acquaviva he's been road-testing this technology for the past five months. Indeed, the whole of last year's Plus 8 tour was run using Final Scratch alongside normal vinyl he soon discloses, adding; "There's a bunch of people clamouring to use it." No kidding.

Whilst some of the most pertinent producers of today are quick to condemn preoccupations with technology, it's clear Hawtin wants desperately to be part of the machine. Heavily influenced during childhood by his father's occupational involvement with electronic advances, his enthusiasm for technology has remained a unceasing hunger to be satiated. Raised in Oxfordshire, England until the age of ten, when his father found employment overseas as a robotic technician his family resettled in Canada, far away from what he believed would have been a bleak future in England. "I guess of course we were lucky to move 10 to 15 minutes away from where it was all going to happen," he recounts, referring of course to the great Motor City of Detroit, just skipping distance across the border from his new Windsor home.

"I think traditional Detroit techno is actually an oxymoron - you shouldn't be able to make techno that is traditional, it should be anything but traditional."

Leaving his small English town for "a very Americanised, weird Canada culture" filled Hawtin with a sense of alienation, leaving him struggling to adapt socially during his teenage years. Invigorated by his father's record collection, and later the industrial experimentation of Skinny Puppy and Severed Heads, by the time he had reached his late teens he'd decided that electronic music was the extra different something he was looking for - "something a bit more personal..." It was during his formative days DJing at The Shelter in Detroit that he met John Acquaviva, and together they self-financed the launch of their seminal Plus 8 label in 1990. In the decade that has passed since, few have dared to explore the confines of techno music as scrupulously as Hawtin and his many monikers. Despite the fact that many of his contemporaries from Detroit's 'second wave' have chosen to distance themselves from the term 'techno', Hawtin has always seen the word as transcending any notion of formula or style. "I think to me techno has always meant the essence of what's behind the music, the push forward to create something new, both musically and within the idea of what you're trying to do. People ask me what I make or have been making, and it's always been techno to me. I came out of the Detroit Techno school of thought but I never saw myself as traditional Detroit techno. I think traditional Detroit Techno is actually an oxymoron - you shouldn't be able to make techno that is traditional, it should be anything but traditional. To me techno is about pushing forward, and I think with everything I try to do it's pushing forward in some way or another, trying to re-modulate or re-expand an idea that wasn't maybe expanded to the fullest a couple of years ago. Progression is synonymous with techno."

Having returned to Windsor for a prolonged studio session and a well-earned touring hiatus, he's reluctant to elaborate on his new musical ideas, professing not to talk about theories until he knows it's "starting to come out musically." "I'm doing a lot of experimenting, that's why I haven't released a ton of stuff over the last couple of years," he explains. "There is always that unknown that I'm trying to search for and hopefully I never find" he states. "When I do, that's probably the age for me to kind of retire."

A fixed focus of the music media since the mid-Nineties, last year saw Hawtin's public status increase further, largely due to the release of his 'Decks, FX and 909' mix CD and the ensuing tour. Yet he seems at ease with his iconic stature, having reached a point of equilibrium between his 'public service' engagements and his personal pilgrimage for pushing music. "I would gain popularity and then I would do some weird-ass album and lose it and take a step back. I guess every time I get a little bit more publicity and popularity I get a little bit more used to it. I've been able to strike a really interesting balance that not so many people have, having the public identity that's popularity but still kept a lot of my freedom to do what I want to do. I've been able to push things. With the new Plastikman albums ['Consumed' and 'Artifakts'], it wasn't what people expected. Lots of people said it wasn't what I should've done for my public career. I want to strike the balance, I don't want to be Sasha & Digweed - no disrespect to those guys, everyone does their own thing. I also don't want to be the knob-twiddler in his bedroom, coming up with something that's so, so crazy that no-ones gonna get it, or no-ones gonna get it for 20 or 30 years. I want that balance, I want to introduce as many people to a kind of deeper side of electronics, the deeper side of techno than they regularly get exposed to, and do it in a really quality way, with as little compromise as possible."

"I want to introduce as many people to a kind of deeper side of electronics, the deeper side of techno than they regularly get exposed to, and do it in a really quality way, with as little compromise as possible."

Surely then, he would agree that increased accessibility to new, handy music technologies is opening up the gateway for a whole new generation of abstract audio thinkers? "Yes it's true, the technology is more accessible to people. It's allowing more people to try to innovate and just to try and test the waters, which tends to desensitise people to the sound of the 909. People are more susceptible to actually sit down and listen to a piece of music that is electronic without being in a club." Throughout our conversation, Propellerhead's virtual studio software 'Reason' is a reoccurring topic of conversation. I suggest that the package is surprisingly user-friendly. "I don't know if 'user friendly' would be the correct word," responds Richie. "Reason, I think is an amazing program, but computer technology is becoming very powerful, so it's becoming very convenient to do things on the computer. I think that's the right way to put it. A mouse and a keyboard, well it's not 'user friendly'. Humans live in the animal world and there's this digital world. For the last 30 or 40 years we've been using a lot of mechanical apparatus to go in between those two worlds, knobs, sliders, etc. That's why Final Scratch is going to be an important thing, because it's an analogue interface to the digital world - that's what we need more of. If I were starting right now as a 16 or 17 year-old kid, I would start attempting to go about human interface design and try to create the optimal analogue to digital interface for the creative person. Even a keyboard is not very creative - that's based on a piano, which is hundreds of years old. There has to be a better way to get musical and creative ideas out of ourselves and into the digital world. I could foresee everything powered by a computer and with software emulation getting really interesting kind of weird analogue hybrids - with one computer, but with maybe three or four interfaces to give it different feeling. We need to capture the human spirit when we make electronic music, that's where good electronic music stands out."

At the Minus / Plus 8 camp, there's been obvious moves over the years to encourage interaction with their global audience by employing digital technology - as exemplified by the recent online Redux contest and the Plus 8 tour diary (basically "four months of daily updates of what was going on in our heads"). "The web is the key to the kind of the development we've been doing the last six years," Richie tells. "We've been online at the end of 1995, and very early on we were seeing feedback. We were doing events as early as 1996 and only inviting people on the website, posting it on Thursday to our mailbox and having a thousand people on Friday. So it's a great interaction of information dispersal, getting feedback and bringing people kind of closer into our world."

But what of the global development picture? Where, from his position as international traveller, does he see dynamic musical advancement coming from, geographically or otherwise, I wonder? "There are a lot of advances starting to happen over in Asia," he concludes. "You forget that there's like over a billion people who have just started to get into it. What the hell kind of electronic shit are they gonna come up with? It's great there's so much more potential. As the rest of the world catches up to Western technology and Western conveniences like cell-phones, pagers and the Internet, people like that will turn to a soundtrack that works within that technology."

True musical evolution is just beginning.

FOR THE FULL-LENGTH OVERLOAD INTERVIEW WITH RICHIE HAWTIN LOG ONTO WWW.OVERLOADMEDIA.CO.UK

WORDS> Alex Ward

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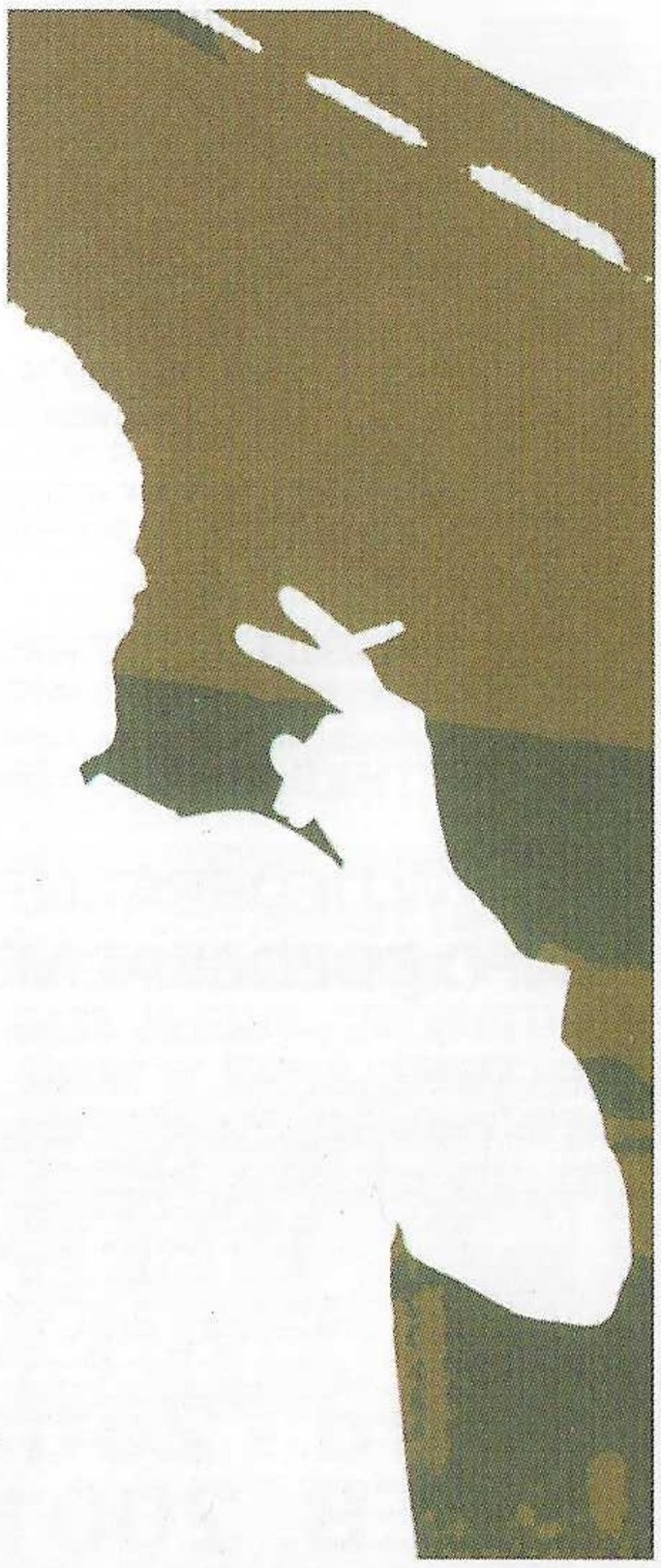

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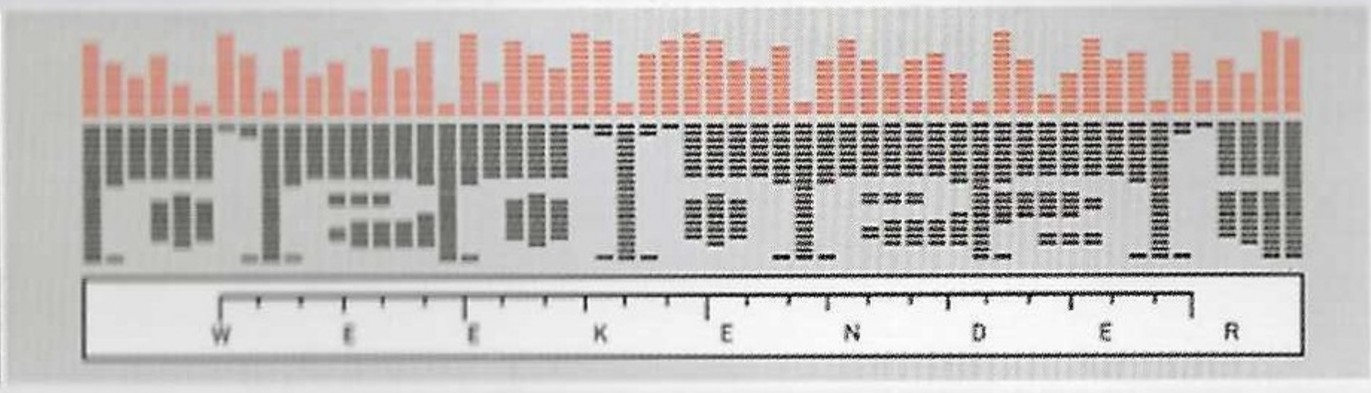

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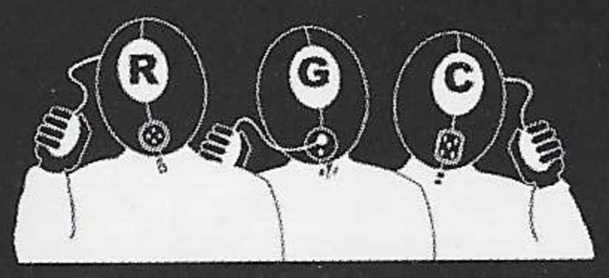

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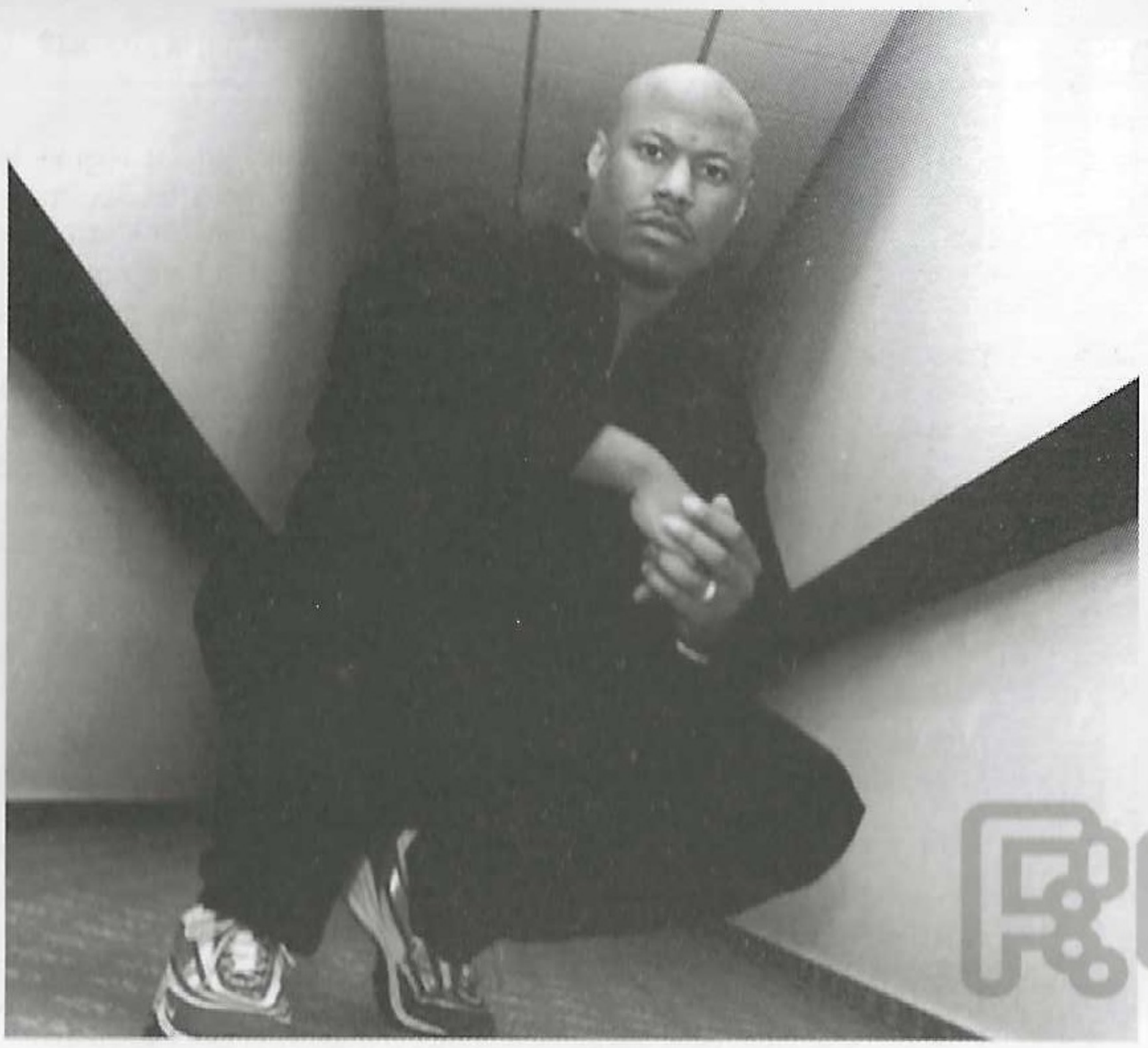


To your seasoned techno trainspotter stateside innovator ROBERT HOOD needs little introduction. Following a period of office with Underground Resistance as a 'Minister Of Information', his seminal works on Jeff Mill's Axis and his very own M-Plant imprint paved the way for a wave of stripped-down dancefloor minimalism that directed much of techno's path throughout the late Nineties. As Birmingham's Surgeon once remarked, "When Hood released his pivotal 'Minimal Nation' EP in 1993, it was like a bomb went off." In a rare interview with Overload, JOHN OSSELAER probes the past and present mindset of the Detroit drum don.

ROBERT HOOD

WORDS> JOHN OSSELAER
PHOTO> WOUTER VAN NEVEL

Very little is known about your musical background. What music did you follow as a youngster?

Robert: A lot of Motown, Jackson 5, Temptations, James Brown... It was just an evolution of a lot of different things. Mojo on late night radio played Earth, Wind & Fire, Kraftwerk, Rick James...

Was Mojo the one who opened your eyes for electronic music?

Robert: Not really. At that time, I guess I was about 14 or 15 years old, there was a station called WLBS. Between WLBS and Mojo. I got influenced by certain artists: Gary's Gang, Telex, etc. All of them formed a kind of prophecy. I thought to myself: 'It's only a matter of time before this electronic sound and this funk sound and disco sound are going to fuse together. Shortly after that I started to hear about Derrick May, Juan Atkins and certain progressive parties, and it just started to evolve from there. There was also an artist by the name of Eddy Grant and he did a kind of reggae-electronic stuff. I would say people like Derrick May, Eddy Grant, Telex made me think 'This is what I want to do, I really want to do this music.' And there's the Chicago sound of course.

You grew up in Detroit, which many people believe to be a pretty hard place. To what extent has growing up in the Motor City influenced your music?

Robert: There was some gang activity. The streets can be mean sometimes. A lot of people get the misconception that Detroit is just entirely rough. It's not entirely that way. There are a lot of good hard-working, law abiding, god-fearing people that live in Detroit, tax-payers and voters. They're just family people. Everybody focuses on the bad things of a certain area, if it's the Bronx in NY, if it's the south side of Chicago.

You became one of the first members of the Underground Resistance collective. How did you meet up with Jeff Mills and Mike Banks?

Robert: I hooked up with Mike and Jeff through a mutual friend called Mike Clarke AKA Agent X. he introduced me to Mike and at that time I had a demo tape, just basically drumtracks, keyboard tracks and stuff like that - and I was rapping on it. Mike was impressed by my drum-programming so he invited me to his studio. He was working on a Detroit compilation at the time, featuring Members of the House, Yolanda Reynolds, some early Detroit artists that were just coming up. We started recording some tracks at Jeff Mills' house - that's where they did all the recording at the time. They were just starting UR and they were doing a track for that particular compilation. It was basically just the two of them.

During your days with UR you and Alan Oldham acted as a sort of ministers of information. What were your operations?

Robert: Alan Oldham was the minister of propaganda for UR at the time. He was doing a newsletter called Fast Forward and a radio show by the same name so it was only natural that he'd be minister of propaganda for UR. At the time I was just the UR gofer. I was doing tracks with them for the compilation, but I started working for them, running errands for them, doing artwork, the T-shirts, the record labels and things like that. I came in on an artistic / business side, just helping them doing some administration for the label.

Later on you moved up to work on tracks and eventually started making your own solo releases. How did all this go about?

Robert: We started working gradually, very gradually on the 'Vision EP', the 'Riot EP', and X-103 really was a big stepping-stone for me because it allowed me to start doing my own production. From X-101 to X-102 it just slowly progressed. It was never like 'Oh, let's rush this artist out.'

You and Jeff Mills left Underground Resistance to start working on Axis. What were the events surrounding this decision?

Robert: You have a group of guys and you record together and run a label together and travel together - so you become like brothers. At some point you start to disagree on certain things and you just branch off. Jeff wanted to do Axis at the time. Myself, I'm not the type of person to just follow somebody - I'm a team player. After a while me and Mike started not to see eye to eye, so shortly after that Jeff left I had to leave because of the lack of mutual respect. I respect Mike and I respect Jeff, but if I can't be respected for who I am I have to leave, whether that's with Mike or Jeff. I love them both, but you have to have mutual respect to be a group, in order to be a family - because I looked at it as family; they brought me up from the bottom. As a man I had to see my way clean of it and do my own thing hence M-Plant.

When you started M-Plant you were involved in some of the most significant techno labels about yet you still felt the need to start your own. What was the philosophy behind starting M-Plant?

Robert: M-Plant was an escape from the rave and gabba sound. I didn't want to do that hard, 160BPM stuff. Nothing against it personally, but I saw the whole techno scene going in that direction. Detroit has to maintain its roots, that is all I was thinking. We are talking soul, reality,

just the realness. The music was getting too belligerent, too ravey, too circus-like. You know, lights, lasers, smoke and not the reality, no kind of social commentary. Marvin Gaye, Martin Luther King Jr., we've got to take it that way. I'm not saying you have to do it like Detroit does it. Rotterdam is only speaking from Rotterdam experience, Berlin is speaking from their experience. I was just saying that I want to maintain the Detroit sound, I want to keep that going.

Although you have been surrounded by some of the most influential people in techno you developed a very personal style. What inspired you to develop your style towards a very stripped down sound?

Robert: Before I got into this music I wanted to be an originator; I wanted to be original. I wanted to keep true to the sound of the original Detroit people at the same time, but I knew I couldn't be like Derrick May or Juan Atkins. I have to be Robert Hood. I had to look inside myself and say 'What do you like, what do you want to hear?' What I've always wanted to hear: the basic stripped down, raw sound. Just drums, basslines and funky grooves and only what's essential. Only what is essential to make people move. I started to look at it as a science, the art of making people move their butts, speaking to their heart, mind and soul. That's the only thing I focussed on and that's M-Plant. It's the M-Plant in every person's mind that is speaking through your heart, through your soul and is making you dance in the process. To me rave was just samples. True techno, the true sound of it is a science.

Although M-Plant is by far the most famous of your labels you also have Drama, Duet and Hardwax. What are the different strategies for those labels?

Robert: Hardwax is harder rhythms. Aside from doing the minimal sound I didn't want to be put in one corner with people saying 'Okay, he's the minimal guy.' It's different feelings. I get angry, I get happy - it's just different emotions. Drama is more to-the-floor, disco party-down stuff. Duet is me and my wife developing the label. It's a heart-felt rhythmic techno sound. M-Plant is just M. Minimal.

What can you tell us about the new 'Nighttime World' that is just out? To what extent is it different from the first?

Robert: It's basically in the same realm as the original Nighttime World, but more of an extention of it. There are more tracks, more expression - a wider range of emotions. I wanted to give the listeners the same feel, but take them deeper into how I feel about the world and how I express myself, how I make music. It's just not about a 4/4 beat because there is the time before, during and after the party. You warm up to the party, get down to the party and cool down after the party. A lot of times I would be riding home with drivers from a party and they will still be playing techno at eight, nine, ten 'o clock in the morning. So I'm like 'Don't you ever cool out and listen to some mellow stuff ?' Take it easy, relax, sit back and think. That's what it is all about, different degrees of techno and music.

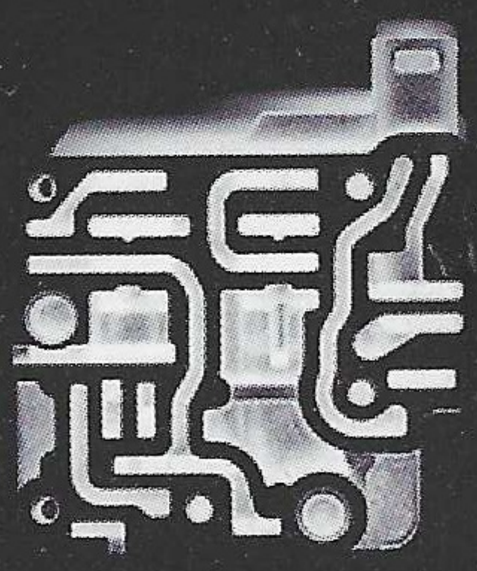
Finally, you rarely play in Europe. Why don't you play here more?

Robert: Racism, that's the problem. My wife does all my bookings, all my management. When I had European bookers I had no problem getting bookings. When I let that go and my wife started to do everything they suddenly started having problems with the language barrier, 'I can't fax you anything. You never call back…' My wife is very thorough, she's the most thorough agent I know. All you have to do is call the number and make an appointment. Why would we turn down a booking? We have no reason to. We heard a lot of bullshit stories.

Like 'Robert Hood is afraid of flying...'

Robert: No. I don't fear nothing but God. I ain't afraid of nothing.

FOR THE FULL TRANSCRIPT OF OVERLOAD'S ROBERT HOOD INTERVIEW, VISIT WWW.OVERLOADMEDIA.CO.UK



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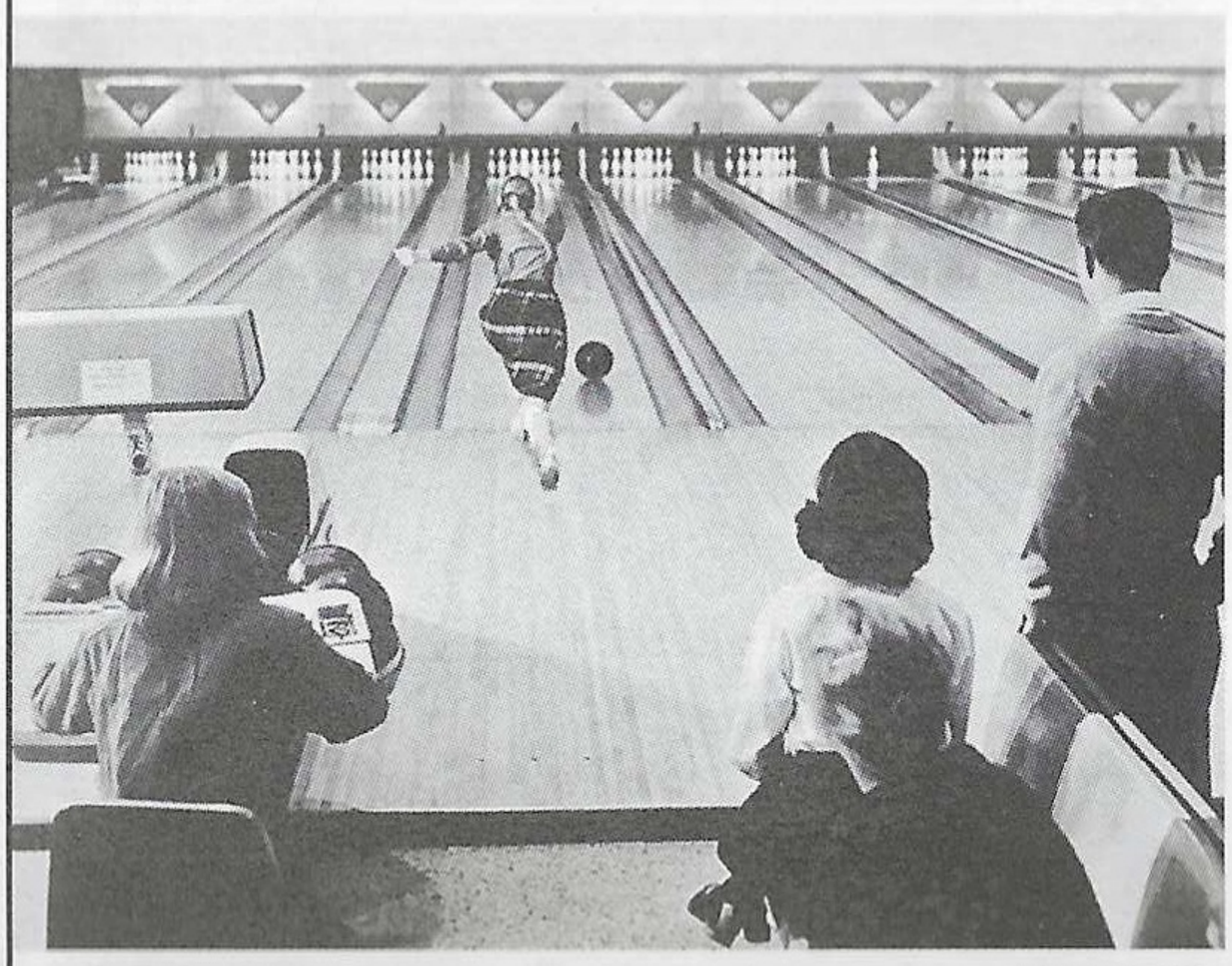

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the slippery path...

It probably doesn't say much for my standing as a fully integrated member of society, but the most intense, enduring and exciting relationship I have ever enjoyed has been with an ever-growing collection of plastic and cardboard. Stacks of seven, ten and 12-inches, little silver discs and spools of electromagnetic tape chart my entire existence. Summers of love and winters of discontent: they're all there, burnt on my brain and encapsulated in sound. In short, my whole life is an open gatefold sleeve.

Running a close second in my affections, is music writing. Unfortunately, this is a rather more dysfunctional situation. Thinking back, I remember when it was possible to pick up a magazine once a week and KNOW that you were going to get something worth bothering with. Believe it or not, I actually used to look forward to Wednesdays. The best day of the week: running down to the newsagent and loading up on mags, holing up in my bedroom and poring their smudgy pages. Reading about records then was almost as good as buying them. The simple reason for this was that the writers were good and cared about what they were doing - in other words the absolute antithesis of their present-day counterparts. It's getting to the point where the music press may as well do away with journalists altogether, simply taking their stories direct from the record companies and PR firms. After all, such a move would both save money and radically streamline the editorial process. No longer would editors have to find idiots willing to read - and subsequently prostitute themselves, regurgitating in their entirety - press releases extolling the non-existent virtues of Modjo or Layo and Bushwhacka. They could cut out the middle man and no one would ever notice. So where did it all go wrong?

Well, it is a widely accepted fact that the inkies' day is well and truly done now that Melody Maker has closed and NME continues to plumb hitherto unimaginable nadirs of bad writing. (Linkin Park and Limp Bizkit - saviours of music? For fuck's sake, I preferered it when they were bigging up Daphne & Celeste.) However, no one is ever willing to break with convention and point out the failings of our peers in the 'specialist dance press'. This is a major problem as perversely this self-proclaimed bastion of cutting-edge counter culture is collapsing under the weight of its own ineptitude and self-importance.

Indeed as respected writer Simon Reynolds recently posited in an interview with San Francisco's consistently excellent XLR8R magazine: "The thing is, because writers still see this scene as underground, they feel like there is some obligation to be totally supportive. You hardly ever get a bad review . . . The media is totally compromised."

When dance music culture was in its subterranean stages, such unquestioning support was necessary to create a sense of community and inertia. However now that electronic music, in its many forms, has taken over the world, such a cretinous attitude is far from constructive, leading to an unquestioning non-culture in which crass banality is the norm.

Amid the rave reviews and 'Caner of the Week' competitions it is rare to see the faintest glimmer of real criticism or cultural analysis, as though intelligence and talent are undesirable qualities in modern-day music crit. In fact, as a veteran journalist friend said to me recently: "Publishers have taken Loaded magazine as the model they want to follow, with its irreverence and lad mentality, but employed writers and editors who would be lucky to get a job freelancing for Front!"

This sense of macho stagnation is widely agreed upon, with Kodwo Eshun stating in the introduction to 1998's sonic futurist manifesto, More Brilliant Than The Sun: "[Dance] press writing [invokes] a white Brit routine of pubs and clubs, of business as usual, the bovine sense of good blokes together. You can see the whole British dance music press - with its hagiographies and its geographies, its DJ recipes, its boosterism, its personality profiles - constitutes a colossal machine for maintaining rhythm as unwritable, ineffable mystery. And this is why Trad dance music journalism is nothing more than lists and menus, bits and bytes: meagre, miserly, mediocre."

The journalistic boys' club is far from an abstract concept, it is real and affects the way music is written about, who ends up on the cover and gets the reviews, and ultimately which writers work. In the current climate where most publications share the same journalists, features and target audiences, it is arguable that the UK market could be easily sated by a single generic publication, trotting out the usual turgid cobblers under the same old bylines. This stranglehold of a select few on the UK media stems from a number of factors.

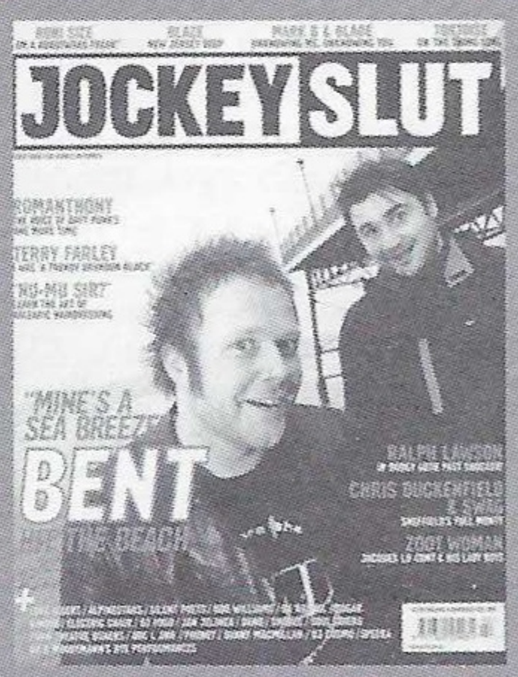
Firstly, the relatively poor rates of pay offered to freelancers make it impossible to survive while working for one magazine. This inevitably leads to writers spreading themselves too thinly, turning in ill-thought-out, badly written copy to keep the bills paid. Secondly, writers and editors are no longer willing to take chances. Due to growing pressure from publishers to increase sales and advertising revenue in an already saturated market, there is little currency in dissenting opinions from uncontrollable contributors (after all, saying the wrong thing at the wrong time could cost a publication dearly in terms of ad space). Thirdly, and most importantly, in the current climate, thanks to the restrictions placed upon writers and the pitiful remuneration, many capable journalists are moving on to other careers, or writing for free 'zines (like this one) and websites.

The short-sightedness of most publications' editorial policy makes a mockery of the freelance journalist's role as musical explorer and cultural tipster. Hence the lack of coverage of quality innovative music. While I personally would far rather read about Kid606, Susumu Yokota or Vladislav Delay than Rui Da Silva, this is not solely confined to fringe-interest releases. Hell, the once mighty Jockey Slut resolutely refuses to cover UK garage. Widely regarded as the most credible dance music magazine in Britain, you would have thought the now Shoreditch-based rag would be rushing to cover this innovative form of dance music. No chance. So, are the likes of Wookie, El-B and M Dubs really of no value whatsoever? Or is it just their working-class, inner-city connotations that make them irrelevant?

In fact this curious mix of snobbery, arrogance and ignorance appears to be at work in editorial offices across the country. "Never overestimate your readers' intelligence," is one thing I've heard said. But, reading between the lines, it is easy to interpret such statements as meaning: "Well, if I, in my exalted position of editor of such and such a magazine, don't know about this, then how can you expect our poor provincial proletarian readership to understand?" Well, all I can say is don't let them treat you like suckers. Vote with your feet. Log on to a decent website. Be discriminating in your choice of reading material, and if you're still disillusioned, why not do it yourself? After all, you couldn't do a worse job, could you?

WORDS> Dave Stelfox

FANZINE JOCKEY SLUT



Glossy, monthly London dance 'zine with occasional 'Load writer contributions...

Not strictly a fanzine, this, with its 25,000 copies, glossy paper and adverts galore, but it did used to have attitude and bite so it kinda qualifies. Features this issue include Chris Duckenfield (interviewed by our own Tom Magic Feet), Bent and Blaze, plus some nonsense about a hairdresser and endless blatant Fabric and Bugged Out! plugs. There are also music reviews, fascinating snacking suggestions and the previously mentioned but quite predictable Home and corporate dot-com adverts. There's plenty of dark denim involved (you don't write for Jockey Slut for the money) and the editorial is distinctly repetitious, which is to be ignored. Not an awful lot of fun, I suppose, unless you supposedly live and breathe Hoxton Square life, I suppose, but I suppose that's the point.

Poor Bunny

PREACHERS TO THE CONVERTED

Ten years ago, a distinguished American journalist predicted that "By 2000, all the media in the world worth owning will be in the hands of a half a dozen giant companies." As we enter 2001, MATT HENRY looks into the impact of the concentration of ownership on the journalistic enterprise.

In January 1998, Bill Clinton proposed to curb the campaign fundraising 'arms race' in Presidential elections by providing all candidates with free commercial airtime. Despite universal acknowledgment that this would be good for democracy, the bill was killed almost instantly. Clinton had failed to account for the influence broadcasting-corporations now exercised in Congress - cries for democracy fell silent on ears more in tune to the sounds of advertising jingles.

That media corporations could have such a swift and decisive effect on the policy process, says little for the allegiance such companies can now demand from editorial staff. The deregulation of America's media in 1996 spurned a series of mergers, buy-outs and partnerships that has left America's media at the mercy of a few giant multi-national corporations. Five players with global muscle have now emerged: Disney, Bertelsmann, AOL/Time-Warner, Viacom and News Corporation.

ABC was reported to have blanketed a story that Disney Corporation (which owns ABC) had hired convicted child molesters at its theme parks.

The American Society of Magazine Editors' declaration last year that editors now need "maximum possible protection from untoward and other extra-journalistic pressures" reflects a growing concern at the effects of this on journalistic integrity.

Like most things American, such a trend is liable to be exported. The Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Culture are currently poised to produce a white paper recommending an increased deregulation of the UK's own media ownership rules. Expansion at home may ultimately be the only way of surviving in the global market the US has now created.

"What scares me most," says Gene Kimmleman, co-director of the Consumers Union in Washington, "is that eventually we may have most of the big players in cahoots with each other and there will be no-one who has a major ownership stake in the dissemination of information with a market incentive to criticise. Who's going to blow the whistle? The way the public gets its information will be predominantly controlled by those who are benefiting from a monopolistic environment."

Yet fears about corporate self-censorship of news information seem already vindicated. The ABC network was reported to have blanketed a story that Disney Corporation (which owns ABC) had hired convicted child molesters at its theme parks. And few in Britain can forget the case of Murdoch's publishing company, Harper Collins, cancelling a book critical of the Chinese leadership by former Hong Kong governor Chris Patten. Murdoch's business interests in China had already led to the removal of the BBC World Service from his satellite broadcasts following a programme criticising Mao Tse-Tung.

Australia is no stranger this manipulation of news content either - a Murdoch financial columnist went as far as to advise readers to buy stock of News Corporation. Four days later, the same columnist appeared in the News Corp's Sunday Mail interviewing the boss: "You've certainly led one of the most extraordinary lives in the twentieth century and it's been entirely of your own making. Can you accept the accolade that you are probably the most remarkable Australian in about 200 years?"

The annual Project Censored awards in the US are testament to the rise of media self-censorship in Corporate America. A team of academics and media commentators scan the specialist and alternative press for stories of public interest that failed to make an impact on the mainstream press. The organisation reports that the number of these stories is growing year on year. AOL boss Steve Case denies that business interests at AOL/Time Warner would ever be allowed to restrict the work of news reporters. "This is not about trying to have some influence over all these media properties for some kind of self-serving reason." It is rather difficult, however, to accept such multi-nationals could exercise such professional restraint - even more difficult when you consider that media corporations have given some $75 million in campaign contributions to candidates for federal office since 1993.

While editorial self-censorship is quite common, Mark Crispin Miller, director of the Project on Media Ownership at New York University, does say that direct corporate intervention is probably quite rare: "Usually it isn't necessary for the boss to interfere. The culture of the newsroom in this corporate system tacitly requires you to learn the ropes. You learn what to do and what not to do. You've got to make a living."

Mark Cooper of the Consumer Federation of America says much of the problem stems from the difficulty of proving a negative: "On the one hand the public understands that concentrated ownership creates problems. On the other it doesn't know what it's not getting."

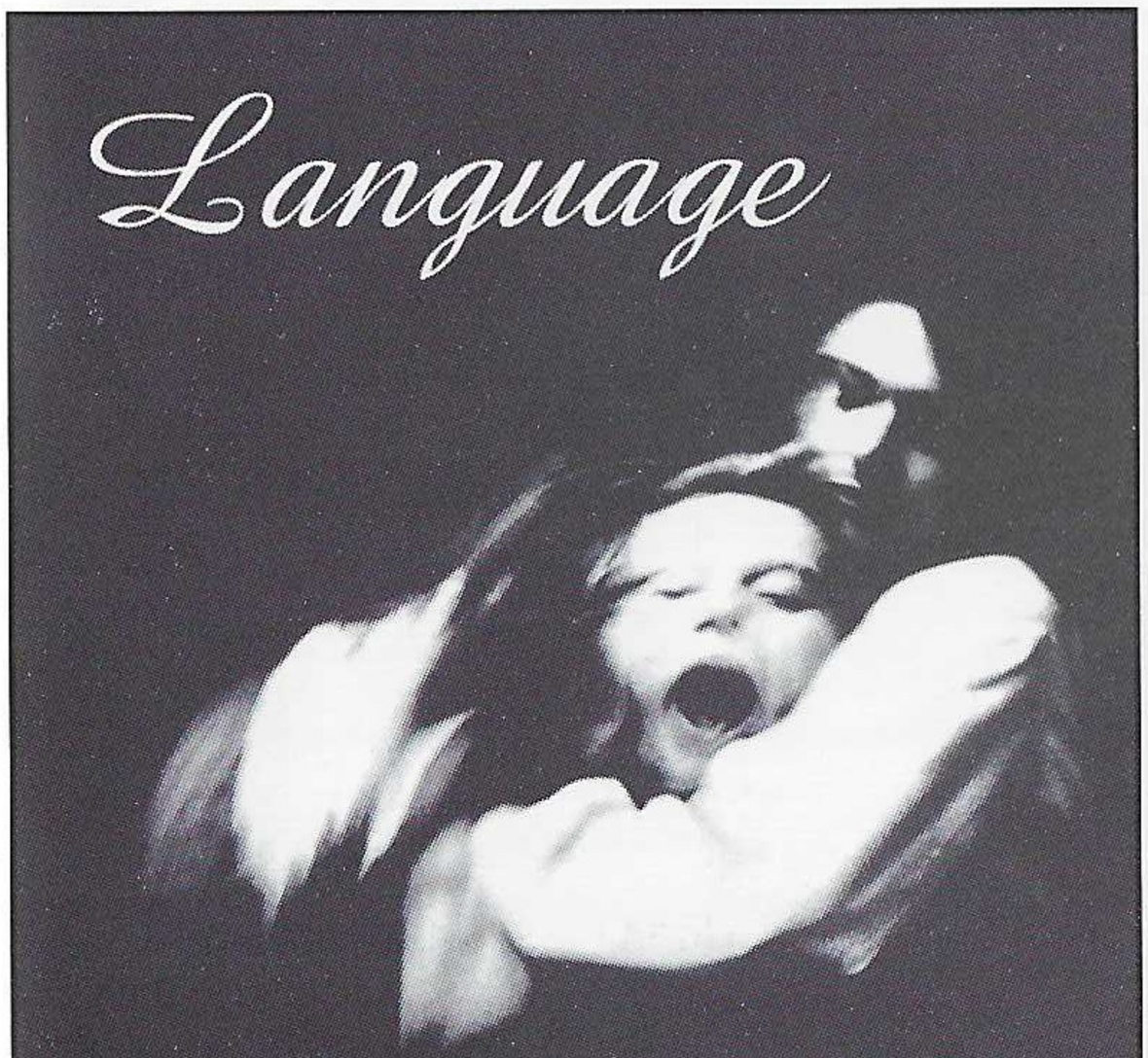
If journalism could ever have been described as a guardian of democracy, its capacity for protecting the public interest has been all but eroded by the corporate profit-motive. Veteran war reporter Peter Arnett claims the country's newspapers, magazines and TV stations now feed the public a diet of crime news, celebrity gossip and soft features, choosing to exclude more serious topics that news managers fear would not stimulate public attention. Project Censored's top ten "most obsessively over-reported stories of the year" do little to assuage such fears. Last year's winners included the sexuality of Teletubbie Tinky-Winky, the new Star Wars film and Pamela Anderson's breasts.

***"The way the public gets its information will be predominantly controlled by those who are benefiting from a monopolistic environment"* (Gene Kimmleman, Consumer's Union, Washington).**

A growing opposition to corporate domination of the media expressed itself in the recent US presidential elections where candidate Ralph Nader pledged to attack the concentration of media ownership. Such corporate hegemony was also an important catalyst for last year's anti-capitalist demonstrations in Seattle that saw the creation of the world's largest independent media news service. The Independent Media Centre (IMC) sort to frame the demonstrations in the context of such issues as media ownership to bypass mainstream news focus on vandalism and clashes with police. Allied to this is the increasing pressure for low-power local radio and more public access to television airwaves.

Recognition of the importance of public discourse in encouraging a healthy and open democracy seems to be a growing trend that new media such as the Internet may help to foster. However, as long as issues like these are ignored by the mainstream press, such advocates will remain contained preachers to the converted. Breaking this catch-22 will become a global 21st century struggle for the restoration of real democratic values.

WORDS> Matt Henry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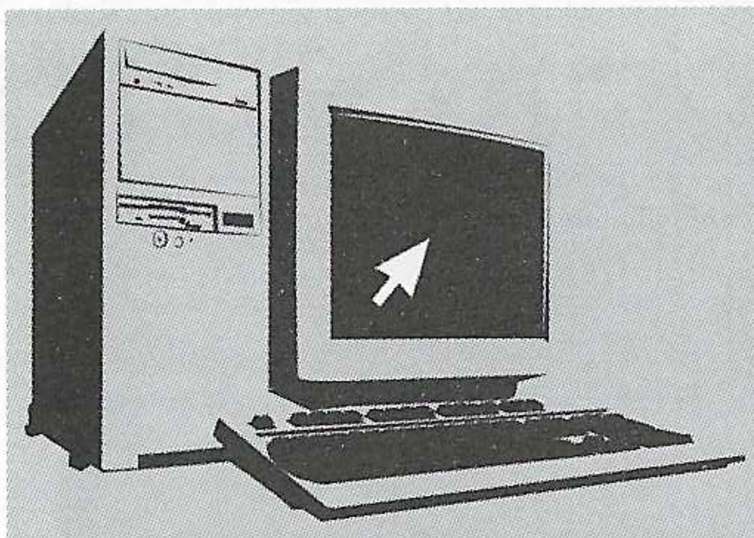


http://www.overloadmedia.co.uk

Plenty of fresh uploads this issue for Overload's online resource site. Among other items, Overload's Belgian correspondent John Osselaer interviews BLAKE BAXTER (Tresor) whilst LOW.LIFE does a spot of research into sonic levitation. In the gallery this issue we have a selection of visual art from PHILIP DOWNS, DARREN SCHIFFERSTEIN, DONOUGH O'MALLEY and LIZ KRCMA. Visual and audio submissions for the site are welcomed (see site for further details). And why not have a laugh at trainspotters slagging each other off on our fiery discussion board. Indeed, why not join them.

http://www.plastic.com

If the CNN concept of news makes you want to cry, or if you relish smart debate of the banal and bizarre, check out Plastic. In the vein of the legendary tech-site Slashdot ("news for nerds - stuff that matters") Plastic is a global news and discussion board about society with one fundamental difference; you send the stories. Initial submissions by SPIN, Feed and Modern Humorist prevented the concept from falling flat on its arse, but also set a high standard for the fascinating, infuriating and downright ridiculous postings by a growing and intelligent readership. Compulsive.

http://www.radiospy.com

Radiospy is a free downloadable application that lets you locate and listen to thousands of online radio stations of every conceivable genre. It also provide tips on how to set up and promote your own webcast with Live365. And for anyone concerned about the legal implications surrounding unauthorised broadcast: "So, you've heard all the stories about pirated MP3s and how the FBI is going to climb into your dorm room window and confiscate all your computer equipment. Not bloody likely. FBI agents aren't all as smart, athletic and good-looking as Agent Scully." You heard what the guy said.

http://www.urban75.com

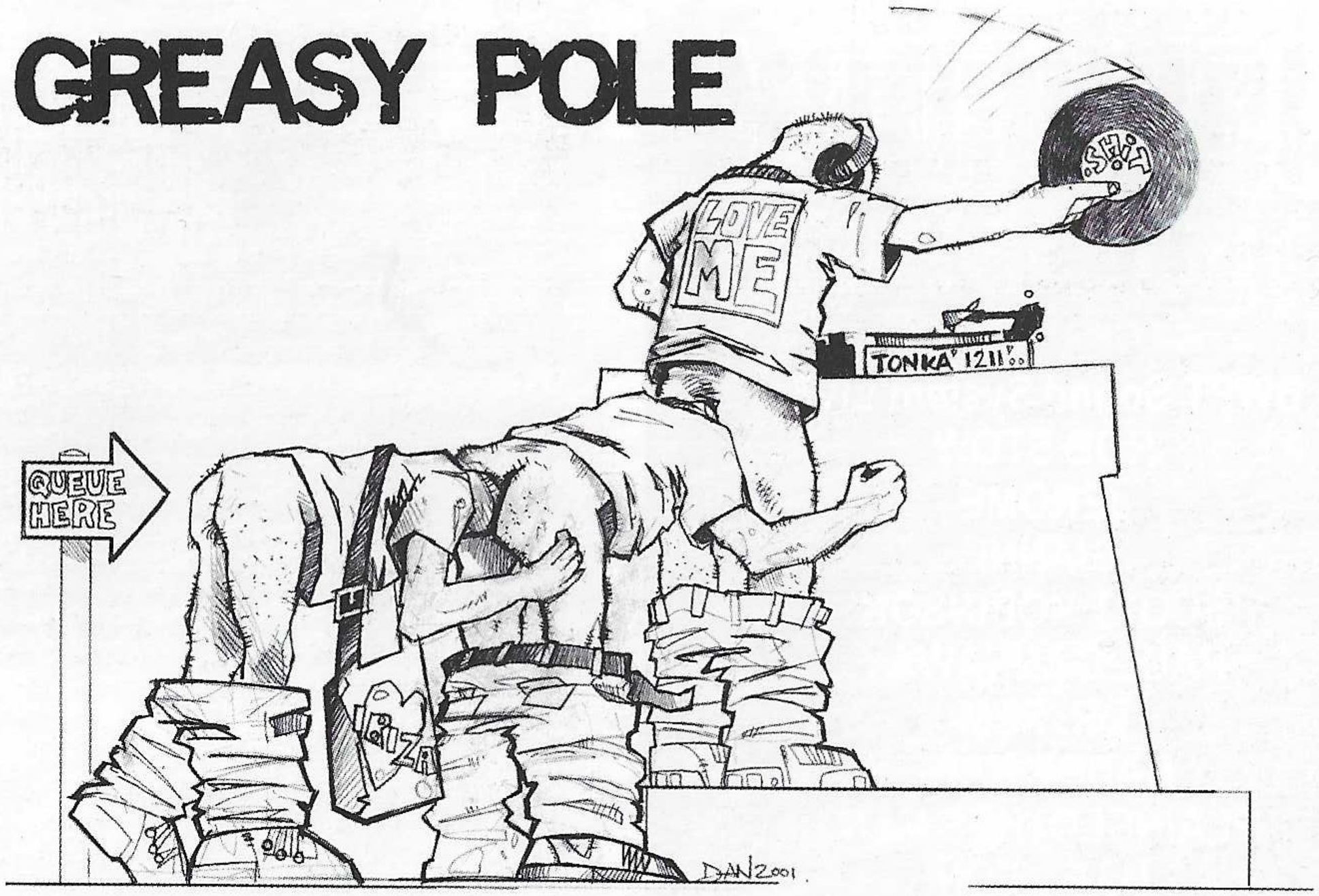
Urban 75 is one of the UK's best informed independent sites. Operational since 1996, the site is a highly navigatable treasure trove of direct-action attitude and information that covers such a multitude of topics you'd best look for yourself. And there's more to this site than just important incisive matters that count - plenty of useless crap too; slap a celeb, witness the legendary sport of 'pant racing', find out if you'll get laid tonight with 'Predict-a-shag', and whatever you do, don't forget to view the world's most exciting web cam ever, the 'Loaf Of Bread Cam.' Essential.

http://www.blacklung.org/features/download/download_ie.html

And finally... It is estimated that in America several billion hours were spent wasted last year as people waited for web sites to load. So the witty bastards at blacklung.org have been working hard to bring you a ONE TIME DOWNLOAD of the entire internet. Heh heh.

WEB BROWSER

THE GREASY POLE



It happened without warning. A deep, American voice said: "Hi, this is Tony Humphries and you're listening to super DJ Danny Rampling on Radio 1 FM." Say what? 'Super DJ'? As in 'Supermodel' and 'Superstar'? Is this man's ego completely out of control, I wondered?

Yet when you think about it, it makes perfect sense. Rampling is at the top of his game, a household name. No wonder he wants to differentiate himself from - pah! - mere Premier Leaguers. DJing is a huge industry, so it's only natural that it should have established its own pecking order. And it has: there now exists a fully defined hierarchy amongst DJs. So far it has been unspoken, but it exists all the same.

In an age when DJing is no longer seen as a hobby but as a viable career option and every FE college worth its salt offers a course in the subject, the DJ hierarchy is what dictates everything from the running order at Creamfields to how much the guy in that bar you were in last night gets paid. It is an intricate web of agents, promoters, magazines and managers, a system based on patronage, exposure and public recognition, on how many mix albums you've sold and how many magazine covers you've been on. Skill, aptitude and musical taste, on the other hand, is fast becoming an irrelevance.

Overload therefore presents, for the first time ever, the complete guide to the DJ hierarchy of 2001. If you're an 'up and coming' DJ, our guide will show you the moves you have to make to climb the greasy pole of success. If, on the other hand, you're already a successful jet-setting record-changer, it might just serve as a reminder of both how far you've come and how far you might one day fall. Failing that, it should at least help you find your true place in the scheme of things. And hey, deep down, isn't that what everyone wants?

So what are you waiting for? Read our guide and in a few years you too could be a Super DJ. Just like Danny.

INTRO: Tom Magic Feet
ILLUSTRATION: Dan Fermor

1) WANNABEE DJS

Examples: Take a peek through the window of the nearest student house.
Where to find them: Mostly in their bedroom, but occasionally seen at house party or in Student Union bar on Tuesday night frowning in deep concentration. On 'Learn to DJ' courses.
Defining characteristics: Got into dance music a year or two back at university, knew immediately they'd found their 'calling' and bought decks immediately. Buys records from HMV as specialist shops are jolly intimidating. Heavily influenced by one or more Super/Premier League DJs. Have never heard of Chicago house or Detroit techno. Still wet pants at sight of a promo copy. Harbour fantasies about pulling foxy DJ groupies, but never will. Cannot talk about anything apart from DJing or music.
Pay scale: Usually nothing, but occasionally £25 and maybe some beer on a good night.
Ambition: To be noticed.

2) STRUGGLING DJS

Examples: There are no famous examples of Struggling DJs - if they were famous they wouldn't be struggling, would they? You probably know several, though.
Where to find them: Local bars, back room on student club nights, warming up at friends' club nights. Anywhere that'll have them, basically.
Defining characteristics: Spend more a week than they make on records. Never very excited about their gigs, but do them all anyway because the money's useful and hey, you never know, it might lead to something.
Pay scale: £50-75 a throw.
Ambition: To land a residency.

3) RESIDENT DJS

Examples: 'Mike Smith', 'Jim Brown', 'Dave Perkins' etc or 'Laggy', 'Devious J', 'Deckmaster Dan' - residents always have either really boring, forgettable names or just crap made-up ones.
Where to find them: In small type at the bottom of flyers. Playing the dead 9-11pm slot before any crowds show up. Still playing in bars midweek, too, only now they don't brag about it.
Defining characteristics: Burning sense of injustice at having to constantly take a back seat to the guests. Secretly delighted when guests don't show up and they're told to fill in for a fraction of the fee the guest would have got. Annoyed at failure to be included on enough mailing lists or pull enough women. Thinking of starting own label to boost name, increase bookings and because no-one else will release their stuff.
Pay scale: £50-200, depending on the success/profile etc of the club.
Ambition: To be namechecked by a more famous DJ and progress to Credible Guest status. And make records.

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6) ALSO-RAN DJS

Definition: On the face of it, the Also-Rans seem to be doing OK. For example, they're not short of bookings and remix requests, but then that's only because these are the DJs that promoters call when the DJs they really wanted are unavailable. The Also-Rans made their names years ago and have spent all their time since endlessly gigging around the circuit without making any progress up the ladder. Deep down they know there's more to life than this, but by now they have a habit to maintain and are too scared to quit.
Examples: Justin Robertson, Billy Nasty, John Kelly, Jim 'Shaft' Ryan, Ian Ossia
Where to find them: On cover of second-rate dance music mags - the Also-Rans never turn down press, it's the only thing that ensures people remember them.
Defining characteristics: Have all the best tunes and can mix, but it's impossible to get excited about them.
Pay scale: £500-1000 a gig. Think it's not enough.
Ambition: To be awarded the status and plaudits their long years of experience merit, of course.

5) NU-BREED DJS

Definition: A media term used to describe young(ish) DJs who journalists have started writing about because they're bored of all the established names. The 'nu-breed' usually favour deep or progressive house and hero-worship Sasha and Digweed.
Examples: Steve Lawler, Craig Richards, Yousef, Lee Burridge, Terry Francis.
Where to find them: Fabric, The Bomb, Home, Bugged Out! etc - any club that likes to think of itself as 'switched-on'.
Defining characteristics: Have actually been DJing for ten years, but no-one noticed until some better-known DJ gave them a namecheck them in a magazine - either that or they won a Cream residency in some saddo contest. Endless long, smooth, boring mixes of long, smooth, boring records that all sound the same. Boring haircuts, T-shirt and jeans. Idolise certain obscure foreign producers. Just started dabbling in production. Already signed the mix album deal.
Pay scale: Up to a grand and rising.
Ambition: To 'work with' Hipp-E, Onionz & Halo.

4) CREDIBLE GUEST DJS

Definition: They keep their heads down and never worry about musical fads and fashion, because the Credible Guest DJs are about one thing and one thing only - music.
Examples: Chris Duckenfield, Kenny Hawkes, Harvey, Phil Perry. Where to find them: At smaller, more credible nights across the UK and abroad playing credible but boring music. In the studio doing 'swap' remixes of credible, obscure records destined to sell a thousand copies apiece.
Defining characteristics: Own credible little label which releases a credible twelve-inch every couple of months, followed by a very credible self-mixed compilation CD every ten releases. Flyers always put the name of their label after their name or else no-one would know who they were. Give dull-as-fuck interviews.
Pay scale: Few hundred quid. It's not about money, you know.
Ambition: To retain credibility at all costs.

10) SUPER DJS

Definition: Household names, massive amongst 14 year old Radio 1 listeners, the Super DJs are the top boys. Is it a DJ? Is it a celebrity? No, it's a Super DJ!
Examples: Judge Jules, Dave Pearce, Pete Tong, Paul Oakenfold, Danny Rampling.
Where to find them: Cream, Home and the biggest, glitziest clubs worldwide.
Defining characteristics: Old enough to have fathered 90% of their audience. Primetime show on Radio 1, TV slot on the prestigious UK Play channel. Several juicy business deals with websites and/or record labels, if not already MD of own label. High-profile summer residency in Ibiza. Several managers and agents. Regular meetings with accountants to discuss substantial stock portfolio. Several mix compilations to their name. Top of bill at Creamlands. Last vestiges of credibility abandoned long ago.
Pay scale: We're talking a good few thousand - Oakenfold starts at seven grand (note the use of 'starts'). The Inland Revenue's choice, natch.
Ambition: What else is there? A book deal? A gold-plated Technics back-scratcher?

9) PREMIER LEAGUE DJS

Definition: Only slightly less famous than Super DJs, Premier League DJs are often Scene-Leaders who have managed to break into the mainstream by virtue of being associated with a hit record or having a nice line in patter, yet they still retain more credibility than the Super DJs.
Examples: Carl Cox, Sasha, Seb Fontaine, Norman Cook, Gilles Peterson, Fabio & Grooverider, Dreem Teem, Tim Westwood.
Where to find them: Top of the bill at all the biggest and best venues, unless a Super DJ is also playing.
Defining characteristics: Usually 35+. Own late-night show on Radio 1 or frequent appearances on the station. Pack out clubs on the strength of their name alone. Either MD of a label or have fat recording contracts. Constant remix requests. Minor part in crap clubbing film.
Pay scale: Not far off Super DJ levels. Loads, in other words.
Ambition: Primetime show on Radio 1.

8) ESTABLISHED CIRCUIT DJS

Definition: Still classed as 'Superstar DJs' by lazy dance music journos, the Established Circuit DJs are booked up for months ahead and doing very nicely, thankyou.
Examples: Dave Seaman, Brandon Block, Boy George, Dave Clarke, Sonique.
Where to find them: Everywhere. If you'll pay, they'll play.
Defining characteristics: Often known as 'good blokes' or 'real caners'. Have own radio show on second-rate regional or Internet station, so consequently desperate for THAT call from Radio 1. Several Essential mixes behind them.
Pay scale: A grand or three a throw, give or take a grand or two.
Ambition: A transfer to the Premier League.

7) SCENE LEADER DJS

Definition: Those given ultimate 'respeck' by their own specialist scene.
Examples: Prime Cuts, Mr Thing (turntablism), Ashley Beedle, Terry Farley (house), Mickey Finn, LTJ Bukem (drum'n'bass) etc
Where to find them: All the most prominent clubs in their scene, occasional forays into crossover spots when someone wants to buy in a little cred.
Defining characteristics: If a Scene Leader plays a record, the label will use it as 'proof' that the artist is great, for example: 'Bongotwat's last release, 'I'm A Bongotwat', found favour with such distinguished names as LTJ Bukem'. Foreign clubbers get all excited when a Scene leader comes to their town. Lots of credible records and remixes to their name. Given licence to play really weird records that any unknown would get bottled off for.
Pay scale: A hefty wedge, mark my words.
Ambition: To keep it very, very real indeed.

OVERLOAD

NEW RELEASES

VERSION 6.0 REVIEW SQUAD

Daniel Jackson, Lucinda Marconi, Nick Craddock, Dirty Dr, Franklyn J, Dave Stelfox, Andy Gain, Nick Doherty, Discord, Valerie Snails, Mathew Riley, Kate Butler, Motorboy, Edward Blake.

WELCOME to the new music release section of Overload. Thanks to everyone who has submitted material for review in version 6.0 - sorry we couldn't fit everything in. Please send new material for review to:

OVERLOAD MEDIA
PO BOX 41
BRISTOL
BS16 3ZB

Please note, the opinions expressed here are those of individual reviewers and not ncessarily those of Overload Magazine.

Releases are listed alphabetically by label.

SINGLES

ACCESS 58 'Vol. 12' (Access 58)
A varied trio of funky techno constructions that should appeal to a reasonable number of DJs who bridge the ever diminishing house / techno divide. A1 is on a similar kind of tip to Rotation material - a mid-paced and crisply produced slab of tech-funk, although probably a little fruity for most DJs who play something that fast. The two B-side tracks are much more percussive and fare better - check B2 for a lively Latino loop cut that gives the likes of Grain and Jamie Anderson a good run for their money. **DJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
MINDTOURS 'Detour EP' (Adapted)
More funky synthetic pleasures from Newcastle's Adapted crew, with Steevio donning his Mindtours persona for a bouncy pair of techno cuts that get rebuilt in unique style by Adapted's Fast Breeder duo. Both Mindtours tracks develop maintaining plenty of space and movement, with the abstract metallic groove of 'Swerve' being the more accessible of the two. However, it's Fast Breeder's remixes that really kick ass; 'Skunk Detour' takes on a fuller production sound and much darker form of dancefloor urgency, whilst their mix of 'Swerve Angle' is a classy slab of minimal alien funk that cuts through tasty filter patterns with a deep punchy bass. **VS**

ADE FENTON & CHRISTIAN WUNSCH 'The Mark Has Been Made' (Advanced)
Advanced breaks into double figures with a split EP of steam-train techno tracks courtesy of the Nottinghamshire label boss Ade Fenton and rising European loop-trooper Christian Wunsch. Wunsch's contributions are very tough and linear with a dense hypnotic consistency, whilst Fenton's blaze a more pounding path across the dancefloor, turning to harder-edged percussion with more edits. A2 and B2 stand clear as the best offerings from each producer, although Wunsch's has the most funk and drive. **FJ**

MARSHALL JEFFERSON VS NOOSA HEADS 'Mushrooms' (Airtight)
An early Airtight fave, 'Mushrooms' (a hallucinogenic house tale where Jefferson recounts his first, and apparently last mushroom trip) gets mix therapy from Salt City Orchestra and Chicago-based producer, Mazi. Both reworkings feature plenty of bassline action and Jefferson's dialogue throughout; the Salt City Orchestra Remix sounds a little ploddy, working a sparse percussive groove with orchestral stabs and layered keys, whilst the Audio Soul Project remix fares better - a driving bass-fuelled cut, underpinned by unsettling tones. Unfortunately the notion of reciting a drug experience flaws the project from the onset. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
MIKE WADE 'T.B.C.' (Archetype)
That man Wade again, with an EP that should gain play from any self-respecting techno DJ. Three tracks, intermittently dark, eerie, accomplished and unrelenting, in the manner of Rob Hood's Duet work. Truly a man ahead of the/on top of his game. Seek and devour. **ND**

RHYTHM MAKER 'Metal Patience EP' (Background)
Rhythm Maker releases have always been about slowly evolving minimal grooves with a distinct dancefloor leaning, and this offering stays true to that whilst venturing into more melodic territory. Track A bumps along over a galloped kick with some nice subtle synth work, reminiscent at times of Aril Brikha's sound. B1 is smoothly looped with a nice rolling momentum and dampened kick and hats, and the final track contains a more overtly pumping bass line, and a gradually rising analogue hook. **NC**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Futuristic Experiments III' (Background)
This release represents a progression for the label, stylistically - exploring slightly more experimental ground. On the A-Side, Rhythm Maker casts warm, lulling tones over filter popped percussion, whilst Gramm (Jan Jelinek) takes the listener on a late night skip through Paranoiaville. Meanwhile on the flip, Dean Decosta makes use of a clever fractured break to create a twisted shuffle in his contribution, and Submania provide some minimal lo-fi house, reminiscent of the excellent Losoul. **NC**

BETA 2 & ZERO TOLERANCE 'BB1203' (Bassbin)
For a duo that sound like they're lead characters in Robocop 2, this pair manage to avoid shooting blanks. Beta 2's 'Make U See' is jungle with a hardcore twist of epicness - crafted with soul to make you dance. The flip side of this third release from Dublin's Bassbin Records trips with a sliced rolling bassline. 'Catfight' from Zero Tolerance also sounds very soulful with a young, black and gifted man sampled getting all achy. Captures some slickness of R&B with a good thrashing of beats. Both sides totally complement each other, making this a really strong release from a drum and bass label that has found its feet, no doubt. **KB**

STEWART S. WALKER 'Jet Fuel & Longing' (Belief Systems)
A sparse yet inventive affair from Walker, exploring techno to a depth that won't suit all but should certainly satisfy those who delight in his lighter percussive output. The complex offbeat rhythms of 'Separation' are ultimately more memorable than the three more melodic constructions on offer, although 'Self-Reference' does mature from ploddy beginnings into a very atmospheric piece of glitch sampling electronica. **DJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
NICO AWTSVENTIN 'Fracturhythms EP' (Bio)
Vince Watson is certainly a man to watch after the success of last year's Tronic and Rotation releases. With his own label Bio picking up pace, Watson rearranges his name into his tougher moniker once more for a fourth release that takes melodic influence from house and bolts on some funky sledgehammer rhythms for maximum impact. Four for the floor, although 'Fracturhythm' and 'Gravity' are pick of the bunch for funk. **FJ**

FLATNER/INGRAM PROJECT 'Rectus EP' (Black Nation)
A varied and classy bit of vinyl from Black Nation; 'Da Comin' gets things rolling with a beast of a tune that marries an echoed punchy kick and simple yet infectious synth-line, whilst keeping things minimal for maximum effect. 'Black Alligator' lumps for an offbeat bassline approach but resists the temptation to over embellish its simplicity, opting instead for some clean, precise drum programming. The B-side is slightly less exciting, with a typical Jay Denham-styled pounder and Denham's remix of 'Da Comin' that goes all out for layers. **AG**

GAYLE SAN 'Backbone EP' (Black Nation)
Two scalpel-sharp slices of raw techno from Gayle that will delight her hardcore following and many more beyond. This could be her first release on a US label (I can't remember too many others) and should become a mainstay on the 'Does The Business' shelf of any collector. Dirty, driving and definitely danceable. **ND**

V/A 'Bios Chip EP' (Blackout Audio)
Mark E.G. and Chrissi let their pals loose on 'Bios Chip' with mixes turned in by Sweden's Hardcell from Skunkworks and Active Disorder from Tune Inn Records. The Active Disorder mix is a good idea that doesn't quite come off, with it's quirky-but-not-at-all-catchy synth stabs, whilst the Hardcell mix goes for a more minimal drum groove and does a thundering good job of it. Also featured is Mark E.G. and Chrissi's 'Colony Interrogator' - a real growler with loads of pitter-patter percussion and frantic cymbal action. A bit overly busy at times but stirring stuff nonetheless. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
BARADA 'Barada Trax IV' (Catalyst)
Tracky techno, breaks and disco cut-ups come together on a strong new EP from US pioneer Bryan Zentz. The A-side is pretty camp but maintains plenty of drive throughout, utilising large basslines, massive horns and wickedly funky percussion. Turn over and 'Hard Flip' sees Zentz put old-skool bass through its paces in a Latino-flavoured cut (reminiscent of Oxia and User material), whilst 'Reboot The Frequency' sees him slide into downtempo mode for a dubby trip-hop ditty. Nothing particularly new, but very well done for the style (s). **DJ**

POLAR 'Skydiver' (Certificate 18)
No fuss, high-speed drum'n'bass on the lead cut. A killer drum loop, some percussive bass, a broody chicken and some distant strings - what more do you need? The B-side offers a more cluttered but equally fast Kraftwerk-influenced jungle track and a rather disappointing downte1mpo number. This release is worth checking out for the stripped-down, storming title track alone. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
CONSTRUCTION KIDS 'Snapshotz' (Choke Music)
A varied snapshot of tracks from Carsten Fietz, Tony DeKaro and Kia Randy that's well worth a look. The A-side features a moody spot of ambient house driven along by well-swung percussion and plenty of bass. Both 'shotz on the flip take a much more abstract tack; B1 being a meditative drum call flavoured by serene Colognic strings, and B2 - a dreamy electro construction that doesn't quite have the potency of it's sleevemates. **FJ**

FELIX AND THE COURTSHIP 'Crybaby Remixes' (Clashbackk)
Much-in-demand house producer Junior Sanchez remixes the first single off Aphrohead's forthcoming LP with effective results. Two warmly produced sides of driving Chi-Town disco; the 'Aphropuff' mix, with a vocal that sounds like Tom Jones on helium, and the 'Aphropuff Dub, which ditches the vocal in favour of more edits. Decent quality gear for the style, although if you're offended by tracks that go 'Na-na Na-na-na-na' you'd best steer clear. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
DERRICK L CARTER 'The Unterscheift EP' (Classic)
More killer grooves from funky Del boy illustrating why he is, quite simply, da shit. All three tracks are utterly mesmerising and contain enough ideas to last most producers a lifetime. The highlight has got to be the rinsin' disco hoedown '10', but the whole record displays a mastery of dance music production second to none. Fuck Moodyman, get Carter. **D**

THE EXPERIMENTAL POP BAND 'Bang Bang You're Dead' (City Slang)
If only they were dead, this record would never have happened. It's a total waste of natural resources and about as experimental as Westlife. Whoever gets off on this sort of pseudo-easy listening crap is right now lounging in some goddawful bar in Clapham, wearing a 'Pornstar' T-shirt and shouting at the top of his voice about how he grew up listening to Cole Porter. When actually he grew up thinking Genesis were the height of cool. **EB**

UNKNOWN 'Complex 4' (Complex)
A double pack collection of raw deep and funky jackin' tools ranging from hypnotic house grooves to growling techno monsters, with a whole lot of stripped down butt wiggling in between. Eight tracks based on evolving simple but effective ideas. A broad range of useful beats for the box. Not particularly complex though. **AG**

ANDREI MORANT 'Unstable Emissions' (Compound)
Two tracks of hard and dark drum-loopery from America's Andrei Morant, a guy perhaps best known for his hard-hitting work on Planet Rhythm's subsidiary label, Template. Only one cut is really worth checking - the A-side with it's stripped-down mid 90's Missile feel. The kicks and hats stay pretty monotonous while a backwards scrape does an intensifying call and response routine. A good idea but a little simply programmed, unlike his locked drum grooves of which you get ten - all treated with great attention to detail. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
GLENN WILSON 'Further Advances' (Compound)
Proof positive that the much-maligned loop can go places through subtle but purposeful editing, and that the key to their success is urgency. This release has both in buckets full although the full length A-side is too progressive to be lumped in with loops. It's subtle bass drone and pummelling kicks stride along with ever building energy provided by percussion and vocal stabs in all the right places but never overdone. What's more, the second cut on the flip is a dirty, stomping must for anyone keen on seeing bodies bounce and faces grin. Quality through and through. **AG**

SINGLES

JUN 'Lizard Flock' (Contrast Music Recordings)
Japan's Jun Kitamura serves up a steaming pile of deep and funky house based around the time-honoured formula of precise drum programming, catchy bass line and meaningless atmospherics. The fact that I can't find anything interesting to say about it is a sad reflection on the tune as well as my wit. Things improve slightly with the remix from Dana Kelly who adds a pleasant oscillating synth to the mix but still nothing is outstanding. **AG**

DEAN COLE 'Corrosion 6' (Corrosion)
Excellent club turbulence from Birmingham's Dean Cole featuring perhaps some of his best work to date. Three dark and very rhythmic techno cuts; A1 builds and mutates fiercely like the best within the style, B1 takes an more intricate rhythmic approach with mournful chords drifting into the mix, and finally B2 opts for a more stripped-down tack, although ultimately with stripped-down appeal. All in all though it's pretty solid speaker thrashing tackle that'll give fans of the Downward sound something rough and ready to get stuck into. **VS**

LA LIGA 'Black Russian' (Carbon)
A relentless build-up of pretty unoriginal sounds that still manages to get a fair score on the funk-o-meter because of tuff production and no attempt to try anything too adventurous, which as we all know can lead to two left-feet beats if placed in the wrong hands. Exactly the same can be said about the remix by Koma & Bones on the flip, except it uses a breakbeat. This sort of stuff makes you feel very grown up. **EB**

>RECOMMENDED<
OKA & YAMAZAKI 'Divide' (Dark House Music)
Given the technologically rich culture there, it's no great surprise that Japan is churning out top quality electronic music producers by the bucket-load. Following their excellent 'Tapping EP' for DHM last Spring, Kenichi Oka and Yoshinori Yamazaki move on a level with four ever-mutating slabs of driving rhythmic funk that will stay in the box of any discerning techno DJ for time. Damn fine loops. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
AARDVARCK 'Ludiek' (Delsin)
Mike Kivits returns after the success of last years 'Spoken' and 'Non-Spoken' EPs with more broken, jazzy breaks and seductive atmospheres for your delectation. With four main tracks and a couple of shorter bonuses there's plenty of choice. From the underwater ambience of 'Kabunkel' to the more predictable jazziness of 'Doeda' - spanning a host of moods and styles between, his undoubted ability to create moody funk is well proven here. Mr Kivits will no doubt continue to court favour with the likes of Mixmaster Morris with this release. **AG**

MARK HAWKINS 'Crtl-Alt-Delete EP' (Djax Up Beat)
A fierce quartet of raw jackin' grooves from Nottingham-based newcomer Mark Hawkins. Drawing palpable influence from kings of jerk 'n swing such as Landstrumm and Subhead, each cut here takes a brash stomp into stripped-down machine funk - the finely titled 'Stickgrinds & Suicides' being the standout with it's squeaky bass undulations and slamming percussion parts. With many producers shying away from this sort of sound in favour of complex subtleties it's refreshing to hear bare-boned techno with such a rabid bite. **DJ**

CHRISTIAN BLOCH 'Deep Night Essentials 002' (DNE)
The label's second release sees the prolific Mr. Bloch at the helm once again - proving his versatility with four tracks of moody and involving grooves that tread the line between 4/4 beats and warm, shifting soundscapes. Side A contains two versions of 'Pole Position', the first taking momentum from churning melancholic chords and the second providing a more linear structure to the theme. Elsewhere, the tight padding hardfunk of 'In Time', and heavy dub mesh of 'Racket' will appeal to both listeners and dancers. **NC**

VISITOR 'Model Two' (D1)
Mark Broom's solid and catchy number on D1 gets the remix treatment in two stages, and this first part features reworkings by Donnacha Costello and Rue East (Broom and long time collaborator Dave Hill). Part Two will feature remixes by Rob Rowland, Octave One, Decal and Bassbin. Costello is on slick dancefloor form with a heavy, dubby bass that carries the original melody. He stretches out the lighter drums, keeping it atmospheric with hi-hats tweaking and then blasts back again for a startling crescendo. The Rue East mix is a mad out-of-it affair, stripped down with pummeling loops. This is as hardass a release as you're going to hear on the usually reserved D1 label. **KB**

MARK VERBOS 'Dead And Buried' (Dosed)
Prolific European looper Mark Verbos with the first release from a new Berlin-based techno label. Very peak-time, very loopy and also very good - four ruff 'n raw DJ cuts with a dark futuristic edge and a quirky futuristic funk that'll have you running on the spot in front of the speakers. B2 breaks out in front of the pack with its driving percussion and cut-up feel. **DJ**

REGIS 'Exercise For Institution' (Downwards)
The Brummie terrace hero returns with two slabs of carefully crafted, atmospheric, loop-laden techno. Few things in techno are as reliable as the much-loved Downwards label, and much like his records the man refuses to stay stagnant, consistently progresses and effortlessly intrigues. **ND**

>RECOMMENDED<
DROP MUSIC PRESENTS 'Spell Bound' (Drop Music)
More groovy as fuck deep house from Nottingham boys Richie n' Riley and the press sheet ain't lying: 'easy grooves, funky-ass basslines'. That just about says it all. All four tracks are solid, particularly the crapply titled but utterly stormin' ' Me Back'. **D**

GRANT GERRARD 'Big Momma' (Dust Traxx)
What would otherwise be just another filter disco tune with soaring strings and popping bassline is brought to life by the funniest vocal I've ever heard. What sounds like a man pretending to be a woman exclaims such filth as "I had to roll over and take it like a dog", "Are you trying to make that shit come outa my throat?" and "Sniff on this Mutha Fucka" to make this the novelty house tune of the year, even if it is only February. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
TAKAAKI ITOH 'Tap EP' (Electracom)
Rising Japanese producer Takaaki Itoh comes good for London's Electracom imprint with three dense slabs of mutating percussive techno rather akin to Oliver Ho's Meta output, plus a remix from fellow Ealing dweller Max Duley. 'Tap 1' sees a searing synth line oscillating between dense layers of drums, 'Tap 2' works an abstract drum groove into an intense future funker, and 'Tap 3' kicks out a highly rhythmic club cut with a real sense of pace. Duley takes a tense ride to the darker side of the dancefloor with a more textured offering, but it's Itoh's impressive take on looped techno that'll have the floors truly rocking. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
A.P.E. 'Blind' (Electric Tones)
Okay. So just because this limited edition seven-inch comes packaged in a really tasty sleeve with a matt finish I'm not going to big it up above its station, right? Right. Because this two-tracker of highly instrumental electronic doings by Adrian Corker and Paul Conboy (AKA A.P.E) - Ross Allen's first signing to Dorado) is also very good. The second release on a new venture from Tim Simenon (Bomb The Bass), 'Blind' is lazy yet highly emotive, sounding like the soundtrack to a very stoned western, whilst on the flip 'I Haven't Had The Chance' cranks deranged effects over some serious bass behaviour. **DJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
MR G 'No Summer EP' (End Recordings)
Colin McBean drops his debut release for The End, and it's an absolute killer. Two soulful deep house grooves with intricate and dynamic percussion and one Latino-flavoured drum-cut which picks up the tempo for the tech-heads. Personal favourite has got to be 'That Day', which sees massive hats and a saucy female vocal drop in and out of a dirty jazzed-out groove. Is there no stopping this man? Let's hope not. **DJ**

V/A 'Eukahoused EP' (Eukahouse)
To coincide with the release of their 'Eukahoused' mix CD, Eukatech are unleashing this three-track vinyl accompaniment. The choice cut is culled from last summer; Audio Soul's 'Back To Joy' is a tuff vocal house track with live-sounding bass from San Fran's Greyhound imprint. Get Fucked contribute a rather disappointing new track on the flip, with a better effort in the form of Rui Da Silva's remix of 'Chinz Ninja' (by Smart Alex) which wanders all over the shop like Herbert getting pissed and trying to make trance. Kinda interesting though. **DJ**

RECK / STIGMATA 'Dragon's Turning Remix / Horny Funka' (Eukatech)
Frankfurt techno star Chris Leibing and studio partner Andre Walter (here together as Stigmata) tuck in to Nils Hess' superb 'Dragon's Turning' to produce a worthy remake with powerful percussion changes and excellent usage of original elements. Hess provides a sparser new track with a fat rasping bassline in the form of 'Horny Funka', but ultimately it's Leibing and Walter's side that's going to end up with greasy paw prints all over it. **DJ**

MHONOCELL 'Amoeba EP' (Evil Deception)
A collaboration by Swedish techno artists Mhonolink and Hardcell, it's a straightforward, heads-down, pumping aerobics-techno workout. All three tunes will undoubtably do it on certain dancefloors and if it was 1.30 am and kicking off, I reckon the production would keep the pace going. But could these tunes ever get the floor burning in the first place...? Like hell could they. Play for one minute, tops. **EB**

>RECOMMENDED<
JUSTIN MILLS 'EP' (Faction)
The maiden release on this new Newcastle imprint features local lad Justin Mills paving the way with a plentiful five-tracker that displays a satisfying variance in material. There's a confident feel to the EP, which in parts is fast paced and driving ('Locked In' & 'Locked Out'), but never self-consciously 'banging'. 'One' has a deep elegant groove with a subtle melody, but 'Reaction 2' has to be the pick of the bunch for me. It's body-moving tribal clatter reminds me of something that Derrick May would play out - indicative enough that there's a new Mills on the block. **NC**

KIT 'Ruckno Rockets' (Fix)
Subhead collaborator and accomplished Playstation musician fronts some freaky lo-fi for the Sub's sub-label, Fix. Kinda like freeform grunge-hop and skeletal oriental cut-ups of film scores - although I'm sure it's not as complicated as that. Well worth buying for the B2 alone, a superbly whacked-out 4/4 waltz brimming with Eastern promise. **VS**

IBRAHIM ALFA 'Daltonista EP' (Force Inc.)
An altogether smoother and funkier outing by a Brighton-based producer that continues helping fly the flag for the South coast's quirky sound. Tracks vary from funked-up percussive house to more downbeat and abstract, but all with a whole lot of feeling oozed into a distinctly individual style. Of particular note are the house-styled 'Number Cruncher' which sounds a lot like two ill-suited tracks playing out of time with each other but somehow working beautifully, and the dancefloor friendly 'Darker Than Blue', which tears up the funky groove formula in favour of something far more original. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
RICHARD LAHAINE 'Balum EP' (Fragmented)
The man named after the best French film of all time (and that includes My Father The Hero), connects on Scott Braithwaite's ever-ready Fragmented. Absolutely nothing to go on here by way of track info, so there's a firin' loop track, two Detroity deep ones and a downtempo bass-led thing. Very good it is too. **ND**

>RECOMMENDED<
UNKNOWN 'I Karumba / U Karumba' (Freelance Science)
Bit late on the review with this EP (only because it disappeared into a certain reviewer's record box! Pah! Ed), but this immaculate pair of tribal tech-housers (apparently emanating from the Soma camp) are well deserving of your attention. 'I Karumba' kicks out some conga-fuelled crossover gear in a highly rhythmic Oxia style epic, but it's 'U Karumba' that make this disc an essential purchase - sleazy, chunky and highly atmospheric deep house that'll work the floor at a variety of pitches. Just watch the speaker cabs when the bass kicks in. **VS**

HARIS 'Right Information' (Get Groovy)
Fresh from working with the likes of Terry Francis and Colin Dale, Haris sounds very much like you'd expect someone to sound who hang out in clubs like The End and Wiggle; clean, spacious house with plenty of techno elements, and very 'polished' but slightly uninspired percussion. The 'Unitor Mix' kicks out some beefy sub-bass and a positive party vibe and is certainly pick of the two here. **DJ**

WILSON SANTOS / LUNITIC 'One Step Beyond EP' (Get Groovy)
Third foray for Get Groovy as they continue to probe the boundaries of deep house with music from both UK and US artists. Two mixes of one track by Wilson Santos, both produced to perfection yet spoiled by naff usage of vocals. The best track the 'Full Poem Version' is a wicked slab of tuff synthetic house which suffers from a horrendous monologue in the break featuring the low monotones of Wilson Santos starting 'this is the underground, the feeling of ecstasy in music...' and ends about a minute later with '...and so it is, house music allows life to shift one step beyond'. Yuck! Lots of DJs will probably play around the break, but it sure makes the record a hell of a less playable. C'mon, didn't anyone tell him? **FJ**

LEN FAKI 'Everywhere Is Nowhere EP' (Goodlife)
German Len Faki previously worked under the name 'Lamonde' for Monoid and [feis], but here steps out eponymously for Michel Amato's Goodlife. Four cool cuts, all kick-happy and bass-heavy, all set for a nightclub near you soon. And also the winner of this month's pretentious title award. Check for the forthcoming release on Turtle Trax. **ND**

THE HACKER 'Fadin' Away Remix' (Goodlife)
The all-star cast of Oxia, Dima and Heinrich Mueller turn out mixes of the string-laden electro/ Euro beat crossover also kindly included here. Dima reverses the formula with a euro disco monster that drops out to a sparse electro section and comes up with a nostalgia soaked winner. Oxia goes for a funky techno feel with the original bassline intact to gain maximum dancefloor penetration, while Mr Mueller gives us a tinkly electro mix and the most laid back of the four. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
RUSSIAN ROULETTE 'Just Fall Out' (High Octane)
'Just Fall Out' is one of the most playable DJ Rush tracks I've heard in quite some time - a dirty bass-soaked Chicago groove with intense hi-hat surges that'll blaze a trail across house and techno dancefloors. Complimented by a darker vocal-free reworking '(Rush's STR8 Mix'), and two more self-indulgent yet thoroughly effective drum workouts on the flip, this is a strong EP and one that deserves to be a favourite this year and beyond. **VS**

PAUL DAMAGE 'Sour Candy EP' (H.O.G.)
The House of God resident follows up his savage 'Illegal Cuts' EP with this altogether more accessible but no less punishing three tracker. The A-side is filled with a peaktime techno epic with electro style synth, heavy breathing and hammering drums. The tune does however fall foul of having nowhere to go after the filters have all been opened up and gets forced into excessive dropouts - it's hardly a problem though, with a good six minutes of carnage preceding it. On the other side we get two more tracks of solid dancefloor material, the first of which is an echoed snare action and backwards melody loop which will do well with manipulation and the second, a minimal monster with a wicked phased bassline and interesting progression and edits. **AG**

JAMIE ANDERSON 'The Tonal Values EP' (Immigrant)
The Bristolian bard of tech 'ause filters his way competently through another two drum-led productions this time for the stateside Immigrant stable. 'Cut 'N Paste' does pretty much that, using plenty of post-production editing to carve energetic if ever so slightly erratic dancefloor bomb, and 'Montage' takes a much jazzier approach, welding strings and an old-skool bassline with aurally pleasing results. Both tracks should delight fans of Artform and Rotation, whilst the additional A-J Scent mix of 'Montage' employs one phat mutha of a bass riff to take a groovier Chicago-flavoured direction that should broaden the record's appeal to a wider house audience. **DJ**

NOISE LTD 'Global Channel / Trig. Ind.' (Intensiv)
More from Wolf J. Henze on Intensive. The A-side commits the unforgivable crime of starting out very strongly (pounding percussive groove and wobbly three note synth lead) and then taking a wrong turn, finding itself among some very dull friends (pointless tinkly arpeggio) and unable to get away until the closing bars of the song. The flip goes the same way only the friends are far more scary and sound like the theme to a dodgy TV crime drama. The only explanation for this atrocity is that it's an attempt to make techno your Granny might like. Thankfully my Granny had more taste. **AG**

ANT 'Get Infected / Radiation' (Infected)
With his skill for producing high-octane party techno now firmly established following well-received releases on labels like the Liberator's Smitten and Guy Mcaffer's Raw imprint, Ant drops two more percussive techno monsters with more drive than a Scottish stately home. 'Get Infected' is an epic bass-heavy pumper with a predictable yet effective structure, whilst 'Radiation' raises the sweat levels with a pummelling percussive cut that adopts a raw Red Seal edge. Apparently his productions are big with Judge Jules, presumably because they're long and he can get lots of autographs signed before he has to go back to mixing. **DJ**

SUIBOM SERUM 'Brother EP' (Insert)
Second release for Newcastle's Insert imprint and an altogether stronger record featuring a production collaboration of local lads Paul Smyth, Stuart Wright and Tim Clarke in construction of four dark techno tracks. 'Wedvag' has the strongest dancefloor presence, building a twisted groove from a ceaseless wavering tone percussion - although both cuts on the B-side explore more hypnotic pastures successfully; the dense droning textures of 'Yon Mogley' and the bassy rhythm of'Howdown'. Don't ask me - must be local speak or summat. **FJ**

REDUCER 'Optimal Performance' (Instillation)
Another set of dark'n'minimal club destined loop tracks erring towards the percussive synth arpeggio style. Of particular note are the kick-less track that maintains plenty of momentum and will make a storming breakdown and track four - a spaciously recorded bit of squeaky organ minimalism that makes good home listening. **AG**

SOUNDTANK EP 'Cranium EP' (Jenetics)
Crisply produced and varying tech-something four-tracker that keeps the quality level up for Jenetic on their third release. Kicking off with the progressive tech-house swing of 'Purists Are Luddites', the Soundtank chaps deliver two techno club cuts on the flip; the intense 'Cranium', rather reminiscent of Beltram's classic 'Ten Four' and the wiggling drum workout, 'Needafix'. Also included is a '2 Thou' mix of 'Cranium', which veers back towards tech-house terrain in its stripped-down and slightly uninspiring interpretation, but on the whole this is fine EP of crossover gear. **DJ**

KILLABITE 'Killabite 03' (Killabite)
With all the fuss surrounding this release, one question remains: is Killabite 3 (a record produced by Rob Jarvis that prompted Ben Sims to put a full page disclaimer in this very organ) actually any good? Considering the glut of old-skool sampling clones that have surfaced in the three years since the release of the original stormers you'd expect something pretty special to make the whole episode worthwhile? Well, wouldn't you? Killabite 3 may emulate that percussive jackin' Killa house vibe, throwing in familiar samples (such as Fuse vs LFO 'Loop') and the odd predictable fill, but as a whole this EP lacks the two main thrusts of the original pair - drive and innovation. **FJ**

CONTINUOUS MODE 'Disinformation Design' (Klang Elektronik)
Ambient vistas, Bontempi synth pop and peaktime techno stormers - all put through a noisy, filtered sieve to produce a spacious, minimal Basic Channel feel. And little wonder, because the man behind Continuous Mode is Andy Melwig, former engineer at Basic Channel Studios, Berlin. Both 'Disinformation Design', an excellent sideways moment for deeper techno dancefloors, and the more hypnotic and downbeat 'Kryptic Mode' are excellent examples of him making maximum use of the 3D sound space to produce amorphous textures of great depth. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
MICHEALANGELO 'Lab 02' (Labrynth)
A decidedly alien outing for this new Portuguese imprint, with two rather different techno grooves from Michealangelo complemented by a tough remix from the UK's prolific Space DJz. Michealangelo turns in one continentally flavoured pounder with an old-school jungle bassline which all sounds a little disjointed, and a much darker (and better) abstract drum cut on the flip. However, it the Space DJz mix that's the backbone of the EP - an angry tribal groove, masterfully crafted in a dark metallic mould. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
MANITOBA 'Paul's Birthday' (Leaf)
After the worldwide acclaim of 'People Eating Fruit' Toronto's Dan Snaith returns with two more tracks of cranky jazz sensibilities, effortlessly catchy melodies and beautiful crisp beats. The title track makes heavy use of Rhodes and trumpet sounds over a Sugar Hill beat yet goes off in so many directions description is futile. The second track, 'Evan Likes Dancing' makes use of intricately timed pops and crackles over horns and plucked banjo to produce one of the finest pieces of abstract music I've heard since the last Manitoba release. Can't wait for the album in March. **AG**

ECHOPLEX 'Divisible' (LL Records)
Pacou's label welcomes back Echoplex for another 2-track session of Red-aping, ram-raiding stutter-funk. Unsurprisingly the Vancouver producer spent his impressionable years across the water from the Motor City in Windsor, and his work often evokes Larkin and Saunderson particularly. Which is just fine by us. **ND**

ATJAZZ 'Touch The Sun' (Mantis)
It's easy to see why Bukem, Peterson and Garnier are lapping up Atjazz releases like hungry puppies. They're immaculately produced, very 'musical', and with plenty of (light) beats, very radio-friendly too. Rhodes, synths and a vocal refrain characterise the richly instrumental original whilst mixes by Tom & Joyce, King Britt and Dzihan & Kamien explore all manner of easy-listening breakbeat arrangements in commendable style. **DJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
OLIVER HO 'From Modern To Ancient' (Meta)
Ho's Meta imprint seems to have taken on a definite house slant with 'Meta 10' and last year's 'Listening To The Voice Inside' LP, and there's a definite house flavour to this EP. The tempo on these four deep and dreamy dancefloor disorientations may still be well up in techno territory, but in terms of percussion production quality and soulful swing, the two cuts on the A-side make most 'tech-house' sound like ten-minute Casio creations. The two harder cuts on the flip evolve hypnotically into unparalleled peak-time techno movements. Probably banged them out in ten minutes each too. **DJ**

MINDTOURS 'Mindtours 02' (Mindtours)
Former Roost-runner Steevio comes up trumps with the second release on his Mindtours imprint. 'Mindtours 02' features one live cut and also 'Steevio's first 909 only tune'; the live side is a gradually building slice of minimalism with an uplifting synth part whilst the 909 track shows off some deft use of this revered contraption using funky hi-hat filtering to give some top percussive bounce. Back to basics, and sounding fresh enough for it. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
MARCO LENZI 'El Robo EP' (Molecular)
Eukatech Records' co-founder makes the first release under his proper name for his own Molecular imprint with two cuts of bass-heavy sample-rippin' arse-wigglin' techno that that never gets cluttered despite having elements a plenty. The A-side cut exudes bags of funk with a killa (geddit) bassline, raw drum rolls and plenty of progression, whilst the B-side takes an equally effective dancefloor direction laying down hypnotic percussion infused with a rich Roman feel. The six locked grooves are also deep and well sculptured (especially B2) making the whole EP a good value package for loop lovers worldwide. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
FRANK HUNTER 'King Of Bass' (Mono)
One of Birmingham's minimal nu-skool comes good with an altogether deeper affair that bends house and Detroit leanings into an engagingly broody slice of bass-heavy techno. On the flip, Cisco Ferreira cranks out a thumping Advent mix with a tough sexy wiggle and classy percussion changes. **FJ**

V/A 'Series III' (Morpheus Productions)
Oliver Way's label follows up 'Series 2' with this rather aptly titled slab of slammin' US style club tracks. Indigo Kennedy offers a funky, compressed sub-bass number whilst Mr Way and Jason Carter contribute a tough jackin' tune featuring the voice of Robert Armani. On the flip Kne'Deep artist Paul Langley gets the house rocking with some altogether cleaner drum programming, and the whole thing is rounded off by a comparatively housey outing by New Yorkers Peter Moodswing and Viscious Vic. Nothing that will enter the history books, although most of the tracks here are certain to see use. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
SI BEGG 'Welcome to the Discotheque' (Mosquito)
The increasing global obsession with disco gets another boost with this platform-stomping EP from Britain's greatest dance-floor asset, Si Begg. The title tune is classic, a simple euro-beat kick drum and bass-note riff gets fed through the dub box and comes out drenched in rhythmic nuances. In amongst the stack of edits and grooves that proliferate this record you'll find another two rollicking techno burners as well. Just too damn good. **EB**

V/A 'Native Sampler 3' (Native)
Theory's sub-label makes a third limited edition release (750 copies), culling deep Detroit--flavoured offerings from a variety of producers; Mark Broom and Dave Hill appear with a nostalgic slice of bass-driven techno soul (the aptly titled 'Old Days'), John Tejada and Arian Leviste debut on Native with 'Round Trip', a quirky percussive number centred around fluctuating key parts. Over the platter, Label boss Ben Sims gets dark and abstract with 'Encounter', and finally Nuron's 'Electric Arc' (featured on the first EP release by seminal electronica imprint Likemind) resurfaces to round off a richly varied EP that's sure to raise a smile. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
DJ FOOD 'White Label' (Ninja Tunes)
This has a heavier and faster bassline than anything that has come out of Ninja in ages. For one wierd moment I thought 'I got the poison, I got the remedy' was going to breakout and a snotty nosed Keith Flint was going to start growling at me from my computer screen. The other side is minimal and is a gorgeous composition of reverbs made from rubbing glass, gently ringing bells and some magus talking about being united to all things. The next track holds a soft, rapid beat that sounds like a bodhran. Yes, so get this, it's far better than anything on the fairly crap Ninja ten-year compilation and it's definitely much, much better than the Prodigy (sorry chaps). **KB**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Noodles Discotheque Vol. 1' (Noodles Discotheque)
Since the outstanding 'Noodles Vol. 1 - The Death of Cool' release a few years ago, many an open-eared music enthusiast has been eagerly awaiting the release of Vol. 2. Unfortunately it's still not with us (now with a tentative release date of Spring 2001) but on the bright side we have the first release on this new limited edition offshoot, and I reckon it's a corker. Featuring a baffling range of styles, all of a very fucked-up and downright silly nature, this EP / mini album will, like it's predecessor, challenge your concept of what constitutes music whilst leaving you thoroughly amused. The Beachboys-sampling "I Get Stupid" by Culture Cruncher is a cracking jack rhythm-based number that's already caused many a grin on dancefloors across the UK, and with some absolutely triffick contributions from Tanzmuzik, Cursor Minor, and of course Si Begg (also in his Cabbage Head guise), the inverted world of electronic music takes another giant step away from its own arsehole. **AG**

M TRAX 'Trip Chick (+ Home & Garden Remix)' (Nordic Trax)
Better known for their work as Mettle Music Collective, this Manchester team serve up two mixes of this deep house title track with its lazy bassline, tasteful atmospherics and highly musical leads. The track is remixed into a latino flavour by Home and Garden man, Tim Schumaker with loads of improvised organ and a filtered piano line that are sure to get those designer sleeves waving in the air. **AG**

CRISTIAN VOGEL 'La Isla Piscola' (Novamute)
For the second single off his album for Novamute we get the South American inspired 'La Isla Piscola', painted in four different shades by Matt Herbert, Beige and Cristian himself. As well as the original mix, with it's sinister march and Latin vocals, we get the 'Travelling Fish Lover' version from Cristian which goes for a Japanese take on 80's synth pop angle and no doubt does it very well if you're into that sort of thing. Matthew Herbert presents exactly what you'd expect of him with his 'Deep Yet Jolly' rendition but by far best of all is the Beige remix which is a butt-skakin' jittery funk, beauty with loads of drum edits executed to perfection. All very fine music from some very fine producers. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
2ND GEN 'And/Or' (Novamute)
This is probably the funkiest release off the debut album and comes with a sterling line-up of remixes. The original swaggers like Scorn on speed, repetitive and distorted but shifting like a viper through tall grass. Techno-Animal turn in two fairly cheeky re-workings, one with new compatriot Dalek laying down some languid rhymes. Si Begg obviously delights in the chance to get 'dark' for once, but can't resist the urge to take it to the block party. Cold Kid wraps things up in a future metal-dub style. Bring on the positive apocalypse music. **EB**

>RECOMMENDED<
THE TWISTED PAIR 'Horny Hustle - The Remixes' (NRK)
A very strong EP from Bristol's esteemed deep house imprint, revamping Joeski & Dano's stripped-down bass-shaking sax-tooting monster from last May with assistance from Drop's Inland Knights and prolific Bristol lad Jamie Anderson. The Knights' rebuild is a real twister, featuring much cleaner percussion, additional synth work and good exploitation of the main sax riff, whilst Anderson lays down one tough tribal groove and an acidic reworking with slight commercial appeal. Though all three remixes will annihilate, none have the swing of the original. So it's a good job they've included that too. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Circulation present Abstract Funk Theory' (Obsessive)
A limited sampler from London's Circulation crew showcases three diverse selections from their forthcoming compilation. The twelve leads with an exclusive from Circulation themselves - an upbeat dub inflected house production, acknowledging old school flavours while still maintaining a deep and fresh sound. B1 continues in this vain but explores deeper, funkier territory with a persistent infectious bass, locking you in with a filtered vocal, warm pads and a cheeky guitar lick. B2 closes the proceedings with a simple, lazy electro groove. Detroit-esque strings and sparse drum programming balance the fat bass action. Nice. **LM**

SINGLES

GEEZER 'Morally Diminished / Scratch 'N Sniff' (Organgrinder 2000)
Guy McAffer tears up the floor with two straight looped techno cuts that push, push and push. Both adopt a similar layered structuring, with 'Morally Diminished' the much stronger and more hypnotic groove from the onset. Big ride cymbals and bouncy noises abound, but the production is dynamic enough to pull it off in style. **FJ**

SEIDENSTICKER 'Schwarz Vom Harz' (Out To Lunch)
You've got to love German press releases. Apparently the last track on this EP "makes the record round". It might have been better to leave it off as an original shape may have given this release something to recommend it by. It's all nice enough but with so much 'nice' electro electronica around there's a lot to live up to and this doesn't quite make it. After establishing a groove each track drifts off into forgettable string noodling and never looks back. I suggest that you move on and do the same. **AG**

UNKNOWN 'Patterns Of Change 03' (Patterns Of Change)
Two more lengthy slabs of housed-up techno tackle on this fledgling label, again from an unknown source. Both are of a strong calibre, though I'd imagine most DJs will find favour with the A-side - a well-crafted dancefloor movement sounding so similar to Technasia's 'Force' that makes you wonder if they've got involvement here. **DJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'EP No. 5' (Penalty)
Take IT label boss Ectomorph. Add in a pinch of Jamie Lidell's crazed electro, a liberal amount of The Hacker's subtle bass and a flash of Steve Glencross' machine mutations. Decorate with the scratching of DJ Godfather and you have the recipe for what is, sadly, the last Penalty release. Tasty. **ND**

PAUL MAC 'Four Candles' (Phont Music)
A diverse treat from Paul Mac on Switzerland's popular Phont imprint, following previous noteworthy offerings on UK labels such as Primevil, Stimulus, Theory and Fragmented. The standout track is a 'Sims' style percussion and vocal piece that will damage dance floors with it's clarity and urgency while other offerings swerve off towards stringy Detroit loveliness and a hard and dark Brummy style shaker, both doing those genres notable justice also. The EP also features a remix of the latter by Deetron, which is unfortunately rather nondescript, but all in all this is a high quality and useful bit of plastic. **AG**

UMEK 'Potential 11' (Potential)
Slovakia's looping lunatic, Umek unleashes yet more European moody minimalism, this time on Space DJ'Z potential imprint. Four driving cuts and three locks that'll please connoisseurs of Euro-flavoured loop matter. Fans of his recent Electrix series should head for A1 - an irresistible reworking of some of the best elements off his Zeta Reticula releases. Caustic marauding bass and a spiralling synth lead, straddle some tough drum action to produce some worthy dance floor material. The old school sonic attack of B1 should also do some damage; sinister twinkling keys and thundering Juno style rhythms propel this beatless creation to an intense finale. **LM**

RUE EAST FEAT. DAVID CARRETTA 'Hold Me EP' (Pornflakes)
The collected talents of Messrs. Broom, Hill and, on the flip, Carretta, combine on this intelligent, inspiring twelve. Three tracks of deep frequencies from the Brit-pair, though it's the Gigolo that steals it with the demented electro of his 'Hold Me' remix. Pornflake is definitely one to keep an eye on. **ND**

>RECOMMENDED<
BEN SIMS 'Remanipulator Remixes' (Primate)
Primate celebrates its 50th release with a double pack of quality remixes of Sims' Remanipulator'. The original is classic Ben Sims; Latin-flavoured, shuffling techno funk of the most inventive kind. Adam Beyer delivers an awesome remix that surely ranks alongside some of his best work. Tight production, a big bassline - even managing to increase the overall Latin feel! Fellow Swede Joel Mull steers closer to the course of the original, adding some serious stabs and even more twists and turns. Also available is #2 with Samuel L Sessions, Jel Ford and Ben Sims himself on remix duty. **M**

MISSTRESS BARBARA '666 FVW' (Primevil)
Canada's primary funkster gets up to some new tricks on this surprisingly housey release for Primevil. A1 takes us furthest from her usual pastures as she drops a minimal funk vibe with spoken word ('love, emotions, vibrations') and delicious vox layers. B1 is a shuffled hats and percussion groover with a 'Jesus Loves Acid' bassline well suited to up tempo house occasions and finally, B2 is a fairly dull and darker affair. Since it sounds so much better at plus 6 (pitch as well as tempo) it's difficult to see why it wasn't recorded that way. **AG**

UK GOLD 'Agent Wood Remixes' (Primevil)
One of Primevil's most popular releases gets re-released featuring the remastered original with its trademark vocal arrangement and a host of remixes from some of techno's hottest producers. Ben Long toughens up proceedings adding extra weight to the drums, Chris McCormack stays true to the spirit of the original, combining it's tribal funkiness with added percussion that injects the track with a housey-latin feel. Lastly, Scott Braithwaite and Craig Walsh take a more typical looped approach. Look out also for #2 featuring mixes by Adam Beyer, Get Fucked, Umek and Recycled Loops! **M**

THE UNSLUNG HEROES 'Talking Hash Smoking Trash' (Product Deluxe)
Tim Taylor and Thule's Thor 54 put a twisted edge on the sound of Hardfloor style acid with the 'Hash Mix', a happy party people builder with a bouncy Roland drum groove, slowly opening filter on a 303 horn sequence and then kicks in with a fat'n'dubby bassline. Nicely done though, it must be said, with a particularly captivating filtered, high pitch warble. On the flip is the much more throw away 'trash mix' which leans towards a tribal drumming angle and over does the layers things becoming boring. **AG**

DJ JACQ 'Ghetto Wisdom' (Real Estate Records)
A superlative release from Tim Baker's Real Estate, keeping the soul to the fore and the beats straight ahead. Only two tracks, but both are on the money with the quirky 'Philosopher''s sub bass and sampled vox stealing it. If this doesn't move you, retire to Weston-Super-Mare immediately. **ND**

>RECOMMENDED<
MATEO MURPHY 'First Impressions' (Relentless)
Doing a better job at A&R than producing (as her recent output would lead me to believe) Misstress Barbara picks up on the talents of Montreal-based Mateo Murphy with devastating effect. Not particularly inventive fare, just four tracks of cleanly produced percussive techno showing Mr Murphy clearly knows how to rock the floor. The first cut on each side bursts with heavily filtered urgency, A2 goes much deeper into the groove employing well-placed strings to show a more subtle edge to his production skills, whilst B2 gets all dark and nasty on yo ass. More please. **FJ**

V/A 'I Can't See...' (Remains)
Sonic Groove's sub-label makes a ninth release with this varied techno four-tracker featuring productions from Dietrich Schoenemann, Greg Vega, Jeff Samuel and Dylan Drazen. The terrain varies from extremely abrasive (B2) to dainty Cologne-esque 4/4 (B1). The first cut on the EP (possibly by Schoenemann?) is the most effective for its style - a phat-ass muthafucka of a drum track, peppered with clinky percussion, angry scratching noises and an incredibly intense break which sounds rather like a Dalek having an orgasm. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
RINO CERRONE 'Special Release' (Rilis Special Edition)
Rilis launches its special edition project with this two tracker of body grabbing yet dreamily soothing tech-house from the stable honcho. The A-side does best, using a punchy sub-bassline as a foundation for thinned-out top end percussion and subtle synth stabs that literally breathe melodic life into the track. The flip is more repetitive, with a virtually constant funky guitar that never does anything to quite justify its existence. Still, a classy release all in all that will delight fans of labels such as Rilis and Superbra. **AG**

RINO CERRONE 'Special Release #2' (Rilis Special Edition)
The second of these limited releases gives us more of the same but not quite getting close to the A-side of No1. There's still no mistaking that crisp Phont-style production and the mood of Neopolitan cool, but there's not enough going on in either of the tracks to hold your interest - especially when both sides end in a loop anyhow. **AG**

MAKATON 'Sanguine' (Rod-Konez)
The fourth release under this banner offers three progressive minimalist journeys with a slightly more reserved tone than usual, opting for simplistic, repetitive bass and hat lines with distant strings or sirens drifting in over the top. All very patiently and accurately produced to slowly reel in the listeners attention and leave you hungry for more. **AG**

CHRIS NAIT 'Evolution' (Salpeter)
Four tracks of filtered techno loops on a dark monotone tip. Dunno who the artist is, or the label come to that, but both inside tracks have a twisted percussive edge that'll keep reasonable pace in a set. **FJ**

STEVE GLENCROSS 'Cut The Chase EP' (Sativae)
Sativae co-boss can certainly keep up with the recent sterling output from his label. This is sexily disorientating stuff; cluttered without being aggressive, bizarre without being anything other than rocking dancefloor-funk. The main track bustles excitedly around a fairly laid-back groove creating a sense of inverted urgency. But the best thing about this release is in the number of well thought-out changes. Drops occur like they should - frequently, yet still keeping the groove steady. **EB**

TOM POOKS & JOY KITICONTI 'Djovedeep EP' (Scandium)
The two Florentines, better known throughout Europe for their Djing, take the label in an entirely new direction and serve up a frothy cup of deep and mellow tech-something. That is to say that it's electronic and it's got beats and shit but also a whole heap of drifty, washy synth textures. Although there's nothing particularly characteristic about them, their tunes do have an indisputable cool to them as we have come to expect from them Italians. The highlight however is the remix from Paul Nazca that fits the Scandium style better and has a bassline to die for. Essentially a tech-funk tune, it has all the makings of an olden days free party monster and has me mincing round my computer right now. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
FABRICE LIG 'Interwaves 5' (Serie)
Four quality electronic compositions from Belgium's Fabrice Lig that all exude a minimal yet upbeat techno vibe whilst exploring a diverse mood set. Choice moments include A2 - a deep dubby construction employing Lig's typically clean and focused percussion, and also B2 - a downright cheeky robodisco groove that jumps from the speakers. Check. **FJ**

V/A 'Chicago / Kalamazoo Connection Remix EP' (Sheep)
After the Chicago/Birmingham connection last time round, Sheep give us the Chicago/Kalamazoo connection here. Two barnstormers from Rush, one from Archetype man Mike Wade, and, best of all, Motown's Fanon Flowers with a DJ Hyperactive style banger. Four for the floor. **ND**

MIDFIELD GENERAL 'Coatnoise (Dave Clarke Remix)' (Skint)
The ever-widening sphere of Clarkey's influence is aided by this small but perfectly formed remix. Not for the purists perhaps, but the subtle percussion, old-skool bass and epic arrangement hit most of the necessary spots. Think Saunderson's remix of Outlander's Vamp with a bit more punch and a weirder title. **ND**

>RECOMMENDED<
SD GROOVES 'Disco Juice EP' (Slide)
You can tell these Belfast chaps had a wedge of decent tracks stockpiled before launching their Slide imprint at the end of 2000. Three fine EPs in as many months, veering towards the tech-house end of the market with polished grooves embracing clean dynamic production. Of the three tracks here 'Disco Juice' stands out, building quickly and confidently using sparse guitar snippets to maintain an incessant funk throughout. The jazzier cuts on the flip rely on less driving elements of the mix for appeal; 'Pride' rides a deep bassline through warm pads and bongos and 'Outside In' uses strings to conjure a brooding emotive atmosphere among acoustic drums and percussion. Just perhaps the one track for the floor, but a strong package nonetheless. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
PERCY X 'Maintain' (Soma)
Glasgow's very own Purposemaker ropes in London's Steve Bicknell for remix duty on this bass-heavy highlight from the recent 'Gain' long-player. The original still sounds superb, taking a journey deep into dancefloor synthetics, whilst Lost's resident mutates the original into an unrecognisable tribal remake that pulses with light dubby percussion in his familiar minimalist styling. The X-man's new contribution to the EP 'Where's The Music?' takes an altogether tougher path reminiscent of Ben Sims' material, keeping the filtered tribal edge yet shifting along with enough changes to make it standout from the norm. **FJ**

D-KNOX 'T.B.C.' (Sonic Mind)
Four of the more obscure moments to come out of the mind of Donnell Knox, who takes his hard jackin' US sound and gives it a very sideways twist. The first track is the most accessible with its high-octane snares, warbling acid bass and luscious strings. Yes, I did say strings! The other three tracks just made me feel nauseous. **AG**

NIELS JENSEN 'Luxus EP' (Speaker Attack)
A rather disappointing collection of evolving tech-house tunes from this Swiss producer. There's plenty to choose from though with six tracks on offer but they all fall into the same mould of un-dynamic loopers with tom basslines and lazy, echoed synth stabs. With better production much of it may rock but as it is it's quite frankly boring and been done much better before. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
WJH 'Shincho EP' (Speaker Attack)
German producer and former owner of Delirium record stores, Wolf J. Henze serves up four sweat-laden slabs of dirty tech loops with more than your average share of imagination and, in some cases, a tune. The excellent 'Shinshi-yo' lets fly with a barrage of compressed body fuel overlaid with a tasty seven over eight arpeggio that gives it that little bit more than most and a distinctly Brummy feel. Also of merit is the Sims-esque 'Shinsho' with insistent shaky percussion, original and effective atmospherics and chunky-as-you-like production. A definite winner for funkier dancefloors everywhere. **AG**

CHARLES SIEGLING 'Star Tracks 01' (Star Tracks)
Technasia's Charles Siegling kicks off his new DJ Tool-centric imprint with this twelve. Faithful to its cause, the four tracks on offer are no-nonsense dancefloor slammers, but true to form with Siegling giving each offering a sprinkling of that polished Technasia funk. Not much to get my teeth into from a reviewer's perspective - it's pretty formula stuff, but it's well crafted for it's purpose and kicks in all the right places. **NC**

SOULMATE 'Go-Move' (Superbra)
Two solid cuts of disco-tech from "a big name in the techno circus" using a discreet moniker for this release. No doubt the trainspotters of this world will spoil his or her anonymity soon enough. Patently destined for the dancefloor, the release contains two dynamic funky loop tracks, the first of which is in a Giorgio Morroder style with tasty aaaahhh sounds, cunning programming and crisp drums. The second (and favourite) is a funky bassline affair with an insistant finger snap and cool filtering, very much in the style of.....bugger, I nearly gave it away. **AG**

TECHNASIA 'Evergreen' (Technasia)
More well crafted melodic grooves from the Technasia boys, once again featuring the vocals of Charlie Siegling. It's a deeper track than 'Force' - the lead version has a nice late night feel and more organic sounding percussive elements than before, and there's an instrumental and vocal version on the A-Side to suit your preference. The flip contains a reworking that represents Technasia at their booming best, letting rip with some classy strings mid-way through. **NC**

>RECOMMENDED<
BEN SIMS PRESENTS '10.1 / 10.2 / 10.3 Samplers' (Theory)
Three separate EPs featuring remixes of Theory cuts by a wealth of artists, all soon to appear together in the mix on Ben Sim's 'Theory 10' CD. Current looping leaders Gaetek, Oliver Ho and Samuel L Sessions join respectable guests Suburban Knight and Paul Mac (as well as some fine lesser-knowns) for twelve Theoretical alterations all on a dark dancefloor tip. 10.3 is perhaps the strongest collection; a fine new cut from Sims sits alongside James Pennington's raw jerky rebuild of 'Theoretical', Gaetano Parisio's angry rattling remake of 'Triangle Theory' and Oliver Knapp's metallic tribal mix of 'Tribe'. The moody minimal mix of 'Late Night Caller' by Iceland's Exos and Oliver Ho's previously unreleased mix of 'Vertigo' on '10.2' (originally intended for 'Theory 8') are deeper highlights. Not exactly a case of 'something for everyone' but a right good spread of looped matter nonetheless. **FJ**

IVAN 'Mockba Beatz' (Tide)
Oliver Lieb has put out some pretty successful music under the guises Paragliders and Spicelab over the years and this most recent offering carries a similar trancey-melodic atmosphere. Unfortunately no amount of dressing this up as 'progressive house' can hide the fact that this is sluggish and rather uninspired. **EB**

ALENIA VS TORUL V 'Ivol EP' (Tissju)
The two Slovenian artists previously heard on labels like Force Inc., Speaker Attack and separately on Iceland's Tissju label collaborate to produce two tracks a piece on this varied EP. Alenia does best with the percussive house groover 'Beyond belief' with it's echoing bass stabs and breathing effect while Torul V's 'Ladua Theme' takes the prize for laid-back cool with it's bubbling acid bass and 'Kromazone' old skool sample that ride atop a chime melody. It's pleasant enough, but there's nothing to really take your breath away. **AG**

UNKNOWN 'Pain 023' (Tortured)
That nasty lad Billy sees his label reach that mystical 23 with a trio of anonymous percussive pumpers from a previous contributor to the label (my money's on Gaetek, Carola, or Beyer, which will give you a clear enough indication of the overall sound). Skip both B-side tracks which are crisply-produced but bland for the style and head for the monstrous urgent throbber on the A-side; gigantic filter sweeps, driving stabs, and colossal ride cymbals - all textbook stuff, but forged in a style more compelling than most. And on a picture disc of a large rotary saw too. How quaint. **VS**

DECAL 'Dreaming Of Electro She' (Trama Industries)
Pre-empting their third album release this EP from Decal makes a statement of electro clarity. 'T*Shock' rushes in at you, clinical electro conjuring up frantic headiness. It swoops above the consistent bassline that is so crucial to their sound. The flip side holds two tracks, the first a remix by Two Lone Swordsmen of Decal's earlier classic track 'Iron Fist.' The original could be the soundtrack to a very funky eighties TV show and the Swordsmen hold on that while anchoring it with a dubby bass. Pacey and fierce - but not as fierce as 'Machine_Gun.' This final track closes a manic EP with an infectious urgency, and it looks like Decal are ready to do war on mediocracy and get down with a full on, no bullshit approach. They're not breaking down, they're just getting stronger with every release. **KB**

>RECOMMENDED<
TRANSPARENT SOUND 'Musique Noire' (Transparent Sound Recordings)
More communication from London's premier live electro outfit, drawing again on Visage, Kraftwerk, UR, and most bleepy, space age points betwixt. All three tracks here are fantastically deep, engagingly bassy, comfortably warm and, most importantly, thoroughly funky. I've heard the future and it sounds Transparent. **ND**

PETER DUNDOV AKA BROTHERS YARD 'Evolver' (Tronic)
Two driving hypnotic droners for the dancfloor. Mr Dudov lets synths take centre stage and the various analogue sequences are left to evolve largely on their own with what sounds like some nifty live tweeking to create an unexpected but effective structure and a clear feeling of the urgency of live performance. Both tracks offer opportunities to take pumping dancefloors into deeper territory with their insistent synth lines and plenty of sharp edits. For a comparison, think Leo Anibaldi epics then add a large glob of current dancefloor dynamics and your getting there. An original dancefloor release. **AG**

PAUL NORD 'Cat' (TT500)
The German newcomer provides a plucky bit of good-times tech house that teeters precariously close to hard house for the Turtle Trax offshoot. 'Cat' lets itself down slightly by predictable snare rolls and other such clichés, but is saved from the dustbin by an insistent pitch-modulated lead line that is proving a winning element in the clubs. The flip features a remix by Richard Summerhayes and Nils Hess, rather saucily named the 'Pornlord Pussy Edit' - a much deeper housey affair with a lovely summery bassline and gliding sustained synths. **AG**

A SQUARED 'Blasted' (Turtle Trax)
A playful release from Chi-town's man of the moment Angel Alanis, raking the coals of disco, jack and ghetto house over three catchy tracks. Not quite up to the standard of his DJ Funk re-write currently doing the rounds, but a belter nonetheless. Be warned: the press release states that Judge Jules is playing this. **ND**

UTILITY PLASTICS 'Utility Plastics 010' (Utility Plastics)
Birmingham's Richard Turner breaks into double figures with more dark n' rugged techno tools for his own label project. Three tough stripped-down drum-heavy cuts that charge along like, um, the other nine Utility Plastics releases. Not that that's a bad thing. B1 stands out as having the most forceful groove. Big fat tools for big fat sound systems. **VS**

MARK WILLIAMS 'Vice 004' (Vice)
Loops ahoy! Tortured and Dark House Music fave Mark Williams kicks out four tough loop-based cuts for London's Vice stamp. 'Drum Generation' is far too formulaic for my tastes (bang, bang, bang, bang, wiggly break, slight change, bang, bang, bang), but 'Code' and 'Vision' are much more pleasing affairs, taking a deeper percussive slant using lingering chords to instil some emotion. Rounding off the EP, 'Soul Windows' is an uplifting techno romp, making heavy use of filter sweeps to power the groove along. Effective enough to see the EP slide it's way into a fair few boxes. **DJ**

PLAYER 69 'I'm A Player' (Wedafuqawi)
Those hard-edged rhythm fanatics at the Wedafuqawi stable do some serious damage here with three dark surging cuts that (along with many of the hard techno cuts sent to Overload this issue, apparently) have found favour with Dave Clarke. If you like your loops flavoured from the days of old but revitalised in an uncompromising modern style, you'll be sure to find something here to invigorate your senses, be it the 'Steps To Enchantment'-sampling 'Entrapment or the driving User-esque groove of the title cut. Hard, yet fair. **DJ**

EXTEK 'Supernova' (Zonez)
Steve Murray maintains Zonez's strong reputation with this punchy EP of tech-funk dancefloor pressure with plenty of crossover appeal. The lead track utilises a crisp and simple conga riff to set the groove and embellishes it with some wiggly top end resonance and a filtered guitar riff that serves as a kind of chorus and works well despite it's clichéd cheesiness. The B-side provides two more tech-funk groovers that although more run-of-the-mill are nonetheless likely to cause a fair degree of dancefloor perspiration. **AG**

ALBUMS

>RECOMMENDED<
PAN SONIC 'Aaltopiiri' (Blast First/Mute)
Pan Sonic are Finnish analog freaks who make decidedly expansive, er, minimal beat music. They used to be called Panasonic, but that was before the Japanese electronics firm said 'no ta' to a sponsorship deal. Since then the trio decided dropping a vowel would be the most honourable thing to do. But aside from all that, they've been busy making music that, like the album title implies (it means 'Wave Circle' for those of you not quite up to scratch on the old Finn lingo) is encompassing and can swallow you up, particularly tracks like 'Hallapyydys.' The music shimmers on this album, and while they always seemed light years ahead anyway, 'Liuos' is iridescent and enlightening. For people who avoid using synths and samplers, there is still a crispness and clarity to Pan Sonic's production. Forget your Flymos and your Dysons, this is analog and it's far more stylish. **KB**

DEVIANT ELECTRONICS 'Blunt Instruments' (Blue Room)
There's no doubt that Claran Walsh, the 25-year old behind this eclectic offering from Blue Room, is both an accomplished musician and a skilled producer. This highly polished nine-track album of breakbeat chillout marries the complex drum programming of Luke Vibert's Plug persona and the melodic thrust of trance whilst throwing in some piano, flamenco guitar, funk basslines and acid on route to the altar. Some of it sounds like its been made the for telly, yet there's evidence of ideas and studio dexterity here that will no doubt see Walsh's talents become much in demand if perhaps he dared to go a little darker. As it is, this is sure to get a fair hearing from both underground and mainstream heds on a late morning comedowns. It's also an effective way of getting your mum into breakbeat. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
MUSLIMGAUZE 'Abu-Dis' (Dor)
Another posthumous release from the ubiquitous Bryn Jones. Notorious when he was at his creative peak, producing what seemed like a couple of CDs per month a few years ago, his releases were beginning to show increasing evidence of a willingness to hybridise his trademark middle-eastern political ambient/mantra/beats with electronics, noise, hip-hop and techno. His untimely passing left us with a few years worth of unreleased material and record companies have not disappointed his fans by continuing the steady stream of releases. Jones remixed several artists from the Law & Auder roster and this 2CD collection features his remixes and interpretations of Talvin Singh, Luke Vibert, Doppler 20-20, Bill Laswell/Makyo, Pearl, Spooncurve, Moondogg, Oyster and Apollon, V-Neck and Force of Angels. Diverse they are too: crunchy electro, grating noise, mesmeric eastern trance, flute-laden breakbeat and quirky electronica are all part of the unique blend. Interestingly, and in keeping with his vision, Jones gave his own titles to the tracks rather than use those suggested by the artists. I haven't heard any of the original tracks but these remixes only serve to strengthen Jones' reputation. Thoroughly challenging and thoroughly recommended. **MR**

V/A 'Jazz Bizniz 2' (Counterpoint)
Forgive the awful title and check this out if you're into all that afro-jazz-funk stuff that's so popular now. There's a good representation of era's here, with the 70s, 80s and 90s all getting a look in. Although, when all of the music sounds so similar you've gotta ask yourself why the 70s stuff can sound as modern as the 90s stuff! But this is no real criticism, there's some swinging, positive music on here that will bring sunshine into a bleak Sunday afternoon. **EB**

>RECOMMENDED<
+ ONE 'Bare Necessities' (deFocus)
deFocus really is, as hoped, emerging as one of Britain's premier labels and this release will have fans drooling. Produced by Plaid but written entirely by their mate Plus One, the music has unavoidable Plaid influences but the music is purer, less wacky and the melodies are catchy as hell. The first tune beams out of your speakers like a Prozac'd-up pacman and bounces around the room demanding that you turn off that depressing head-banging rubbish and prepare yourself for the rich journey into melodic heaven the rest of the album takes you on. **EB**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Did You See' (deFocus)
London's deFocus are one year old, and with a record out every month of last year the whisperers of wonderful electronica celebrate by releasing a corking cut-price (retail of £5.99) compilation of Detroit-flavoured sofa rhythms by the likes of Lackluster, John Tejada, Aphelion and CiM. Basically showing off about the good year they've just had. CiM also produces a number of thirty-second interludes to glue it together in a style similar to the early Transmat compilation 'Relics'. Happy birthday. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Going Through Life' (Delsin)
Amsterdam's Delsin Records have been serving up down-tempo mood music to critical acclaim since 1996, catching the ear of such luminaries as Kirk Degiorgio and Ian O'Brien along the way, and this, the first proper compilation from their back-catalogue, serves as a very accessible intro to the Delsin sound. Commencing with the friendly melodic rhythms of Lucky & Easy's 'Blo Sum' the mood of this CD comp remains fairly light throughout. Cuts like 'Dimensions' by label fave Peel Seamus with it's enigmatic drumming, Ross 154's 'Moon FM Desire' with it's ghostly ambient overtones instil plenty of depth, whilst the likes of CiM crank out the snappy percussion. Missing some classic Delsin moments, but a winner nonetheless. **DJ**

WILLIAM RUSERE 'Shona Folk Melodies' (District Six)
First release in the Juxtapose series, highlighting traditional folk music from around the globe and adding a contemporary angle with reinterpretations by electronic composers. This collection features the music of the Shona people from Zimbabwe and a finger piano called an Mbira. Its distorted buzzing sound is considered an integral addition to the music and this goes down well with the likes of Burnt Friedman, Gaby Karpel, Mils and Plaid. Most go for continuing the theme of extraneous buzzing, particularly Mr Friedman, who turns in a jolly jazz mix with many different rhythm signatures. Plaid's contribution is twee yet stylish, although none quite match the wigged-out originals. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Nummer Drie' (DUB Recordings)
Electronica. It's a funny old beast - there's so much of it, and so much of it sounds like something you've heard before, only worse. I really like this Dutch compilation however, as it's constantly inventive and also fulfils my theory that good tracks often have the shortest and silliest names (see here; 'Velth', 'Pandu', 'Bin', 'Fog', 'Wiert' & 'Bitch'). With comparisons now out of vogue in music press 'Bin' by Quench sounds like Boards Of Canada attending midnight mass with Squarepusher, 'Reform' by Phako sounds like Richard James getting a rubdown from Travis, and 'Wiert' by Funckarma getting sound like Funkstorung getting jiggy with Plaid in whilst Autechre take photos. A pretty good recommendation I'd say. **VS**

ALBUMS

DANIEL WANG 'Idealism' (Environ)
Born in Tibet and adopted by Chinese parents in California, Daniel felt the need to move to New York at the age of 15 and fell foul of the evil influence of 'the Philly Sound' and Moroder style disco. By 93 his disgust at the humourless repetition in modern club music led him to faithfully reproduce that sound and start producing dated but nonetheless tasteful electro funk to release on his own Balihu label. With a loyal fanbase worldwide this new album will be sure to sell but unless you're a big fan of this kind of thing I'm afraid that your first reaction will be one of "Aaah! Cheese". Especially when you reach his rendition of 'Misty' on a Theramin. If endless authentic synth noodling with vocoder vocals sends your hair curly then drench yourself in the soulful sound of Daniel Wang. If not then sup up your Babycham and lets get the hell out of here. **AG**

UUSITALO 'Vapaa Muurari live' (Force Inc)
Forging fractured Colognic sensibilities with fuzzy soundscapes in a bizarrely congealed sonic stew, this seventy-minute dub-swathed delight from Force Inc nestles slightly awkwardly into the sea of skank 'n glitch from which the likes of Pole, TV Victor and Jan Jalinek hail, bringing bolder rhythms into play to complement the tonal atmospherics. The mood is very Germanic throughout, and whilst a few of the fourteen tracks on 'Vappa Murrari' sound slightly dated and rigid there are a couple of real beauties on this live recording that surpass much music of this ilk. Check the sublime 'Social Selection' with it sparse house beats and thick waves of melancholic chords and 'Bedroom Selection' with it's throbbing dub bassline and spacious pacey feel. Personally I feel the quality of tracks drops off a bit towards the end, but overall this is a goods hours worth of sofa-surfing spiff fodder. **VS**

V/A 'Midweek Breaks - Compiled By Afterlife' (Functional Breaks)
The clean-cut hedonism of the Functional Breaks label takes a pleasant diversion into chill-out land. There's not much to differentiate between the various tunes in this compilation, indeed most of them sound like they were done in the same studio, even by the same people - but Afterlife's dreamy vocal songs stand out with a nicely naïve edge to their middle-of-the-road melancholia. **EB**

>RECOMMENDED<
BIG BUD 'Late Night Blues' (Good Looking)
In a scene where many producers follow trends rather than developing their art, Big Bud makes a refreshing change, working & experimenting with his own style ever since his very first releases on Creative Source. With flavours of his early musical influences - jazz, reggae & soul present, Big Bud creates deep, epic tunes that are emotional, thought provoking and powerful. Promo'd on double CD, the sublime new album 'Late Night Blues' offers both a collection of groovy, down-tempo tracks (blended together with help from a funky jazz compere) and a drum and bass mix. Amongst the highlights are the downbeat 'On The Six' and the enlightened atmospheric drum & bass tracks 'Space Dub' and 'Pure'. Highly recommended, this is a finely constructed, mature album with great production quality. **DD**

>RECOMMENDED<
RICHIE HAWTIN 'Selections 1990 - 2000' (Hardware)
Canada's favourite bald beat junkie gets out his back-catalogue out for Australia's Hardware Corporation, culminating in a ten-track CD-only re-release that maps out Hawtin's extensive production work over the past decade in a familiar yet well-structured package. Given the sheer range of material he's been responsible for (a point emphasised by the eight-page discography included here in the sleeve booklet) the quality of music here is expectedly faultless (although much of his older rawer material dominates) - with tastily designed black and white packaging to boot. Entering Hawtin's twisted acidic world via the sublime electronic entity 'A New Day' (as Fuse) the compilation visits classic artefacts such as 'Krakpot' and 'Spastik' (as Plastikman) and 'Substance Abuse' (again as Fuse), alongside more contemporary moments such as 'Are Friends Electrik' (again as Plastikman) and 'Minus:Orange' (one of only two records to be released under his own name). Any self-respecting fan could probably burn themselves a CDR like this from their own collection, but for those with a penchant for all things Richie, oh, and the law of course (ho ho), this a very nice item to own indeed. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
THE ADVENT 'Time Trap Technik' (International Deejay Gigolo)
Cisco Ferreira achieved commendation in electro circles with early R&S productions such as 'Space Opera' and 'The Project', reinforcing public perception of his electro leanings back in 1996 with the split electro / techno 'Kombination Funk'. Timely, then, for Ferreira to return with another noteworthy foray into world of robotic breakbeat and alien grooves, here with an amalgamation of new and back catalogue material for DJ Hell's Gigilo imprint. From the onset, this fifteen-track Kraftwerk-spirited journey flits from deep and intricate to fiercely percussive, and there's not a duffer in sight. Pity it's a CD-only release by the looks of it. **FJ**

LESSER 'Gearhound' (Matador)
What starts out as a bizarre medley of glitches (there's even a track called 'Obligatory Glitch Worship'), snares and piercing whistles quickly transcends any confusion and what us common folk know as music strikes out like a figure from the veins of coarse marble. Lesser is a chipper, a careful moulder - definitely not to be confused with a hacker. No, here you have a reverence for heavy metal, rap, hip hop, drum and bass, samples, synths, James Mason, radio friendly and fireworks. It's all here folks. J Lesser, aka LSR is a progeny of some weird school of West Coast silicon sensibility. Collaborator of Kid 606 (on Mille Plateaux amongst others) and touring member of Matmos, he has already staked a solo stance with Vinyl Communication. Like another West Coast crate digger, DJ Shadow, he has made this album as a tribute to those who wear their music as a badge of love, honour and till death do them part. However, he does not build; there is minimum layering here, no sample crescendoing upon sample. He changes form. He radically alters sound. By track seven you'll see what we mean. 'Intuit like an Innuit' unfolds a melody and absorbs. After that 'the Gearhound Suite' forms the axis of the album, featuring four parts named with astute reference to the specialist silliness of the world we've entered: 'Lurker,', 'Chinstroker,' 'Tablegazer,' 'Gearhound Magi.' Is Lesser a Magus? Not likely, but we'll keep an eye on this star. **KB**

>RECOMMENDED<
BROADWAY PROJECT 'Compassion' (Memphis Industries)
After a string of innovative EPs, Dan Berridge brings us a long-playing look into his strange and melancholic world. After contracting ME Berridge shut himself away in self imposed exile in Worthing and set about writing music; music that gives voice to the pain and frustration he was feeling and to the hope and joy brought about by the healing effect that his song writing was having on him. For those unfamiliar with the Memphis Industries sound, this is expansive soundtrack sampling at it's finest. 'Compassion'is somewhat darker than what we've come to expect from the label, but bound to stir the emotions of any listener. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
KID 606 'PS I Love You' (Mille Plateaux)
An hour of tapping glitchy experiments and warm tones that admirably explores the laptop hinterland of scratchy rhythm music and sees Kid 606 take a notably more ambient direction than much of his early work. Fans of Pole, Biege and other skeletal sound technicians will find an immediate charm in this album, such is the rich, enchanting nature of this futuristic electronica. For others, it may take a little time, despite being the most accessible work I've heard from him. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
SND 'Stdio' (Mille Plateaux)
Blissfully chilled electronica from Germany's distinguished experimental stable with the seemingly oligatory undecipherable packaging. Dubby, sparse and utterly unhurried, this may be nothing particularly ground-breaking. but it sits confidently amongst its peers and adds a further page to the ever growing catalogue of contemporary aural wallpaper. **M**

>RECOMMENDED<
MONOMORPH 'Departure Can Wait' (Nature)
Marco Passarani's Nature label put out a couple of absolutely cracking albums last year. Hot on the heels of Passarani's '6 Katun' and the outstanding 'Jolly Music', Rome's renowned purveyors of down-tempo electronics serve up more weird, wired and wonderful breakbeat of a truly engaging 'nature' [Doh! Ed]. Monomorph are Roman twins Marco and Fabrizio D'Arcangelo. The pair caught the ear of a certain Richard D. James back in 1996, culminating then in a six-track release for Rephlex, and three years later in 1999 with their first album (also under the wing of Rephlex), 'Shipwreck'. 'Departure Can Wait' possesses an intricate yet welcoming charm throughout that will woo fans of slow, rhythmic and slightly wigged-out electronica who like something a little challenging but not excessively introverted. Tender chords and lofty melodies collide with haunting tones, delicately scattered beats and occasional bass patterns to create an admirable listening experience that whilst not as immediate or ultimately as loveable as 'Jolly' certainly sees many a new idea on display and many an old one well executed. Personal highlights include the serene title track with its layers of drifting atmospherics, and 'Sixtyst Nox' where gorgeous warped vocals and cinematic strings combine with a filtered electro lick. Another Italian job well done. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
BURNT FRIEDMAN 'Plays Love Songs' (Nonplace)
Had to be a winner this; the third, finely honed incarnation of an album recorded over the past four years, originally intended for release on two other (now defunct) labels. 'This is more than music alone, it's the rhythmic poetry of Amor' states fusion genius Friedman when describing this delectable new long-player for his own Nonplace project. Fusing spoken word and incredibly complex sample work into a richly humorous form of music, this ten-track anthology of love-tinged twisters (five of which appeared on last year's 'Lovesongs' EP) dances out of the CD player with polished production and zestful wit a plenty, embracing physical and emotional notions of love, lust and longing. 'It Hurts' tells the tale of a sexually repressed young office worker who breaks his arm falling off his workplace building whilst trying to get in, all set against a backdrop of warm-chords and sparse jazz drumming, 'I Go With You' is future pop genius with it's live bass work, joyful melodies and rather disturbing vocodered crooning, whilst 'Sex Working Class' encourages us to 'choose anything you want, and fuck with yourself.' How splendid! Some of his breast work, no butts. **VS**

2ND GEN 'Irony Is' (Novamute)
Like a ten-ton robot destroying buildings as it hurries to a robot party, 2nd Gen in the sound of mass being moved in unconventional ways. Creator Wajid Yaseen clearly cannot stand to see the L.E.Ds dip below red, but he still manages make Grind-Hop that could be played on mainstream alternative media. This is no bad thing though, the result of not deviating from funk and using distortion as a relevant atmosphere and not some sort of sonic scalpel only out to annoy. 'Irony Is' does get slightly thin on ideas, but Wajid is definitely an artist to keep an eye on. **EB**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Circulation Present Abstract Funk Theory' (Obsessive)
Circulation have managed to amass a faithful following from many quarters with their musical stance somewhere in the middle ground between house and techno. This compilation helps show why, and avoids sounding as disposable as a lot of 'tech-house' (sorry) collections. Sure, there's plenty of synth washes here, but they're bound by some true funk - amply illustrated by Carl Craig's 'Televised Green Smog'. The groove proliferates further with contributions from Random Factor, At Jazz, and Motorbass to name but three more of the eleven. If I'm preaching to the converted then it's worth mentioning that there's an exclusive Circulation track here, as well as an additional appearance from Matt Dunning as one half of Subtech. **NC**

>RECOMMENDED<
TRAFFIK 'New Chapter' (Pagan)
Affie Yussuf and Trevor Loveys have a pretty high pedigree in the deep house world following five years of acclaimed releases on labels such as Ferox and their own House of 909 (909 Perversions). The duo's new 'Traffik' project on Pagan certainly furthers their notoriety, with eleven tracks of deeply soulful Chi-Town-flavoured house guaranteed to find firm favour with fans of funky 4/4 on the house, techno and disco tip. Characterised by crisp spacious production, fluid grooves and well-fused elements, 'New Chapter' draws a wealth of influences into the melting pot, as exemplified by some of the standout tracks; the bass-heavy old-skool grooves of 'Diskonekshun', 'Second Event' and 'Raise Your Hands', the guitar lickin' disco-phunk of 'Don't Fail', and the twisted dubbed-out jackin' of the title cut 'New Chapter'. A highly refreshing new chapter all in all, moulding many old flavours with an obvious flair for studio trickery into a highly digestible form for appreciation both at home and on the floor. **FJ**

JOSEPH NOTHING 'Dummy Variations' (Planet Mu)
Being the latest of one Tatsuya Joseph Yoshide, he of the previous incarnation on Sub Rosa as Rom=Pari. The press release states that Joseph's strengths are creating 'memorable melodic hook-lines which evoke childhood'. What this means is that these tracks, although undeniably inventive to these ears, come across as twee noodling most of the time. Too cute for their own good, Joseph Nothing's Dummy Variations are an insanely catchy and incredibly irritating blend of found sound, elastic breakbeats, moaning ambience and thoroughly processed effects. This must be like having a child that seeks attention when you just want to watch the football. Needless to say, fans of Mike Paradinas and associated chums will gobble this up. My foot will just not refrain from tapping and I guess you can tell I can't make up my mind whether I like this or not. Oh be quiet and eat your dinner! **MR**

CRISTIAN VARELA 'New Electronic Audio Architectures' (Primate)
Hotly tipped Spaniard Cristian Varela makes an album Debut for Primate, with this triple-vinyl pack slightly dispelling the stable's stigmatised stance on the funky loop. From tough, electro-tinged openings, through terrain encompassing serene, string-led breakbeat cuts, house and not forgetting plenty of loop-based matter deriving from Swedish/Latin influnces, 'New Electronic Audio Architectures' is quick to draw influence from a wealth of genres, electronic and otherwise, which, whilst being a pleasant surprise does perhaps result in him spreading his production talents a little too thinly. It doesn't work particularly well as an album, although cuts like D1 also serve to remind that of all the people producing funky percussive techno, few equal the polish and flair of this man - although I dunno what Primate fans will make of some of the jazzier house moments. 3 locks complement the package, surprisingly enough. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
JAN JALINEK 'Loop-finding-jazz-records' (~Scape)
Pertinently placed on Pole's prestigious ~Scape imprint following his well-received 'Tendency' EP last issue, Berlin's Jan Jalinek (also known for his work as Farben on Klang Elektronik and Gramm on Source) delivers a quality downtempo longplayer in the form of 'Loop-finding-jazz-records'. Eight tracks of warm, soulful electronica, with notable jazz and dub influences shinning through the fuzz and crackle to create a thick web of machine emotion. Sonic valium. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Soma Compilation Seven' (Soma)
Drawing together twelve more months of label talent from UK, European and US shores, Soma's seventh showcase compilation represents the broad nature of Glasgow's premiere dance imprint with an expectedly high level of quality and audio origination. Both CD and vinyl versions contain similar track listings, adjusted with forethought to best meet the requirements of each medium. Commencing with the gentle jazz-fuelled grooves of Abacus' Chaser 'Blue Planet' remix (CD version only), the album strolls soulfully through the boundaries of house, techno, disco and future-jazz, enlisting label faves such as Silicone Soul, Gene Farris and E.B.E to appear alongside mixes of Mfon, Percy X and Pressure Funk by some of Europe's production cream. Since the first Soma compilation seven years ago, this series continues to be an ever-welcome snapshot of an ever-consistent label. And an essential purchase for anyone who missed out on the tracks first time around. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
IAN SIMMONDS 'Return To X' (Stud!o K7)
Awash with understated harmony and shuffling, fractured rhythm, a languid tone of contemplation permeates 'Return To X''s nine tracks. From the unctuous double bass and spine-tingling harpsichord effects of the opening 'Fathom's Down' to the military percussion and undulating strings of 'Blues For VC', 'Return To X' evokes a raft of evocative imagery. Close your eyes and its wayward widescreen panharmonics conjure scenes of rain-soaked streets in unnamed cities, smokey basement clubs and moonlit rendezvous; while a romantic sense of intrigue calls to mind smokey jazz clubs the darkest films noir. Existing in the shadowy space between past and future, this album perfectly captures the nebulous nature of NOW: sweeping surges of rhythm and melody, constantly shifting, building and fading away. **DS**

>RECOMMENDED<
TECHNASIA 'Future Mix' (Technasia)
With a string of highly acclaimed EP releases under their belt, Technasia set out to storm the world with their unique perspective on electronic music, presented in the form of a broadcast on their Chinese radio show, advert, DJ and all. Whether on pumping club cuts like 'Hydra' or the more orchestral numbers like 'Future Mix', throughout the album they manage to fuse solid physicality with faultless and mesmerising musicality to create an anthology with true crossover potential. Originating from cultures miles apart and often working via the Internet they bring together a host of influences from across the world of electronic music, viewing the whole world as their target audience. Many of the tracks on this LP are, or will be, considered as anthems on the techno scene, and well they should with such perfect strings and unparalleled funky drum programming along with a willingness to get twisted when it's called for. The radio show theme adds much to the experience as well, binding the album together in unique and compelling style. Don't turn that dial. Stay tuned to 97.1fm for Future Mix. **AG**

DAVE TARRIDA 'Paranoid' (Tresor)
Co-Sativae label boss turns out a fine sounding album that scythes across a range of styles in his inimitable obscure funk style. After the hectic, popping bass of 'Stop the Ride' the album settles down into more spatial techno territory with no end of originally sourced sounds to keep your appetites whetted, all with the laid back twisted house and electro cool that he's become known for. It's the rawest that I've heard on Tresor in a good while and a whole lot better for it. Wicked synth work in its raw loveliness presented with an original ear by a quality producer. What more do you want? **AG**

CARTHAGE 'Self Imposed Exile Session' (TVF)
Took a while to work out where to place this review as it appears to be a continuous mix of tracks made by Bristol-based Carthage, yet there are contributions by some folk called Pho and Quad and elements from other sources too. So, not strictly a self-produced collection but mostly, and commendable too. Unpredictable downtempo breaks and warm if rather mournful tones fuse to form two mood-moulding thirty-minute mix sections. Its difficult to comment on individual tracks as there's no song data burned onto this CDR, but believe me, for the most part this is varied and fresh-sounding electronica. **DJ**

MIXED COMPILATIONS

V/A 'Hardware DJ Series 002' (Hardware)
2 techno mix CDs, the first mixed by Voodooamt, or Patrick Lindsay to you. Mixing artists such as Phono, Thomas Krome, G Force, DJ Rush and some Voodooamt tracks, Lindsay flawlessly ensures the adrenalin flows and the pace builds. The Voodooamt tracks are themselves respected in their own right: 'Needlehopper' and 'Wavez'. What more can I say? The second CD is mixed by an Australian DJ, Jeff Taylor and is of the fairly hard n' happy variety. Tribal rhythms and vaguely disco influences show themselves as the mix grows, the harder trance-inducing elements of 2B, Dhamas and particularly Dub-Tech Soundsystem increase the chances of an hypnotic bedroom experience before coming down to earth with Resonance 44's electroid 'Summer In Space'. **MR**

V/A 'In Case Of... Frank Lorber' (Harthouse)
Long-time resident at the legendary (and now defunct) Omen club in Frankfurt, Frank Lorber takes his fave moments from last year and (slightly) blends them into a distinctly Germanic-sounding mix for Deutshland dons Harthouse. Be assured, this is not yer usual grinding loop fodder. Sure it's tough, but these are really 'tracks' (remember them?) and the selection is pretty cool too. Taking multiple productions from some of the artists breathes a good level of continuity into the mix - three slabs of Slater and two dark stormers from Justin Berkovi sit alongside the likes of Johannes Heil, Alter Ego, Stanny Franssen and Si Begg. The mixes are short yet well-timed which, given the current climate of mashing things up into a percussive pulp, achieves a lot of movement between the tracks. And playing the tracks mostly in their entirety makes for a seventy-four minute mix that doesn't have the same mind-numbing effect as listening to thirty or so percussive loop cuts being feverishly manipulated and crammed onto a CD. **DJ**

MIKE DEARBORN 'Don't Fuck With The DJ!!!' (Majesty)
Mike Dearborn - architect of many an awesome club cut - churns out a debut mix comp for his Chicago-based Majesty imprint, fusing some fine moments from his own back catalogue alongside work from contemporary loop barons such as Ben Sims, Christian Smith and Chris Liebing. The title is apparently a half-serious/half-tongue-in-cheek comment about how people shouldn't bug the DJ when they are mixing and (to quote Dearborn) how "people with minimal skills are playing out, making spectacles out of themselves on the decks with silly gimmicks." Indeed, on the CD sleeve he even lists twelve 'questions' he find particularly irritating when playing. The 'joke' might almost be funny if it wasn't for the simple fact this rather directionless 'journey' to Loopland is glued together with gruesome overuse of mixer effects and more than the odd dodgy spinback. The tracks are banging club tunes from the onset, which is a personal pet hate for mix comps - and being so po-faced just makes the whole episode look a bit silly. To be fair there are some good moments in the mixing and the track selection, but it's all far too ironic for me. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Leaf Compilation Mix By Susumu Yakota' (Skintone/Leaf)
I didn't want to take up too much length to this review as there are only fifty or so copies of this Japan-only release floating around in the UK at present, but when you combine one of the UK's most eclectic electronic labels with one of Japan's most wanted DJ/producers the results are certainly worth documenting. Not so much mixed as hand picked and arranged in order with slight overlap, Yakota's twenty-five-track selection is certainly a more digestible introduction to Leaf's non-agenda than the plucky Osmosis compilation from 1999, culling nothing too harsh or obtrusive from the vaults. Featuring the highly individualistic production talents of Pole, 310, Freeform, Manitoba and Yakota himself, there's certainly no criticism in the music; a fine spread of the label's rich organic produce from 1997 to 2000, including a few previously unreleased gems. Yakota's fading between the tracks is very rapid at times yet there's little to complain about as attempting to blend such a bold palette of material in more of a complex method than this would require far too much effort for significant improvement. In any case, the ordering of the mix is majestic; from the captivating tribal groove of Eardrum's 'Swarm' with its hot moody vibe and flustered brass section, to tripped-out xylophone ditties from Rob Ellis and skeletal future funk from Beige. There may be millions of mix CDs lurking out there, but very few have a shelf life this anywhere near as long as this. And no, you can't have mine. **FJ**

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V/A 'Force Inc 2000' (Force Inc)
V/A 'Pagan Deep Club Classics' (Pagan)
ORGAN GRINDA 'Creative Combustion' (Pro-Jex)
EWAN PEARSON 'Small Change' (Soma)
SILO 'Alloy' (Swim)
BLAKE BAXTER 'Dreamsequence III' (Tresor)

CHARTS: (CHOICE CUTS FROM THE YEAR 2000)

BEN SIMS

THEORY RECORDS, LONDON
BEN'S 'HOME & AWAY' CHART

1) BLACK WATER 'Untold' (430 West)
2) JEFF MILLS 'Every Dog Has It's Day 1 + 2' (Axis)
3) RICHARD LAHAINE 'Balum EP' (Fragmented)
4) OLIVER HO 'Listening To The Voice Inside LP' (Meta)
5) PHOTEK 'Solaris LP' (Science)
6) LIL LOUIS 'Why D'Ya Fall? Remix' (Bootleg)
7) V/A 'The Button Down Mind Of Daniel Bell' (Tresor)
8) OSCAR MULERO 'No.2' (Warm Up)
9) LAID FEAT. EMMA 'Love Affair' (Loaded)
10) CASSETTEBOY 'Di + Dodi Do Di' (Barry's Bootlegs)

PAULA TEMPLE

VIRTUAL FUTURE MUSIC, LEEDS

1) LE CAR 'Motorway Sparks (G.D. Luxxe Remix)' (Ersatz Audio)
2) INIGO KENNEDY 'The Difficult Third' (Asymmetric)
3) DJ ONE FINGER 'House Fucker (Umek Remix Part 2)' (Missile)
4) TECHNASIA 'Force' (Technasia)
5) DIEGO 'Mouth Full Of Fresh Cut Flower LP' (Kanzleramt)
6) COLD DUST 'Nervehammer (Micheal Forshaw Remix)' (Real Seal)
7) CHICKS ON SPEED 'Will Save Us All' (Chicks On Speed)
8) DJ SHUFFLEMASTER 'Weekender EP' (Phont Music)
9) TERRANCE DIXON 'From The Far Future LP' (Tresor)
0) DJ RUSH 'Stomp' (Djax)

DJ JASPER

CYTRAX, CALIFORNIA

1) PHONO 'Module' (Cytrax)
2) RILIS #1-5
3) SND 'Stdio' (Mille Plateaux)
4) REGIS & FEMALE 'Gay Scene' (Downwards)
5) ANYTHING BY G-MAN (AKA Gez Varley)
6) DEEP CHORD #7-9
7) JAMES RUSKIN & OLIVER HO 'Mutate To Survive' (Meta)
8) SUTEKH 'Periods Make Sense' (Force Inc.)
9) KIT CLAYTON 'Nek Sanklet LP' (Scape)
10) 3ST VS DASH 'U Know' (Rampe D)

TONY MORLEY

THE LEAF LABEL, LONDON
(TONY'S HOT POP CHART)

1) WU TANG CLAN 'Gravel Pit'
2) WOOKIE 'Battle'
3) NELLY 'Country Grammar (Hot...)'
4) DESTINY'S CHILD 'Independent Women Part 1'
5) OL' DIRTY BASTARD FEAT. KELIS 'Got Your Money'
6) DE LA SOUL FEAT. CHAKA KHAN 'All Good'
7) SPILLER 'Groovejet (If This Ain't Love)'
8) DR DRE FEAT. EMINEM 'Forgot About Dre'
9) MADONNA 'Music'
10) SUGARBABES 'Overload'

OMSLAG

JACK OUTPUT, BRISTOL

1) JOLLY MUSIC 'Jolly Bar' (Nature)
2) SEELENLUFT 'The Rise & Fall Of Silver City Bob' (Klein)
3) V/A 'The Button Down Mind Of Daniel Bell' (Tresor)
4) BLUE STATES 'Nothing Changes Under The Sun (Memphis Industries)
5) COLD DUST 'Red Seal 10' (Red Seal)
6) SILICONE SOUL 'Right On For The Night' (Soma)
7) KARL O'CONNOR & PETER SUTTON 'Against Nature' (Tresor)
8) MARCO PASSARANI '6 Katun' (Nature)
9) MANITOBA 'People Eating Fruit' (Leaf)
10) V/A 'Hmm' (Sprawl)

JONAS STONE

EPM, LONDON

1) JOLLY MUSIC 'Jolly Bar' (Nature)
2) SENOR COCONUT 'El Baille Amein'
3) COLDPLAY 'Parachutes (Parlophone)
4) V/A 'Eskimo' (Eskimo/Music Man)
5) ROBERT HOOD 'Nighttime World Part 2' (M-Plant)
6) TV VICTOR 'Timeless Deceleration' (Tresor)
7) LB 'Pop Artificelle'
8) JEFF MILLS 'Every Dog Has It's Day Vol. 1 & 2' (Axis)
9) V/A 'Disco (Not Disco)' (Strut)
10) SIMON FORD 'Wreckers Of Civilisation' (Black Dog Publishing)

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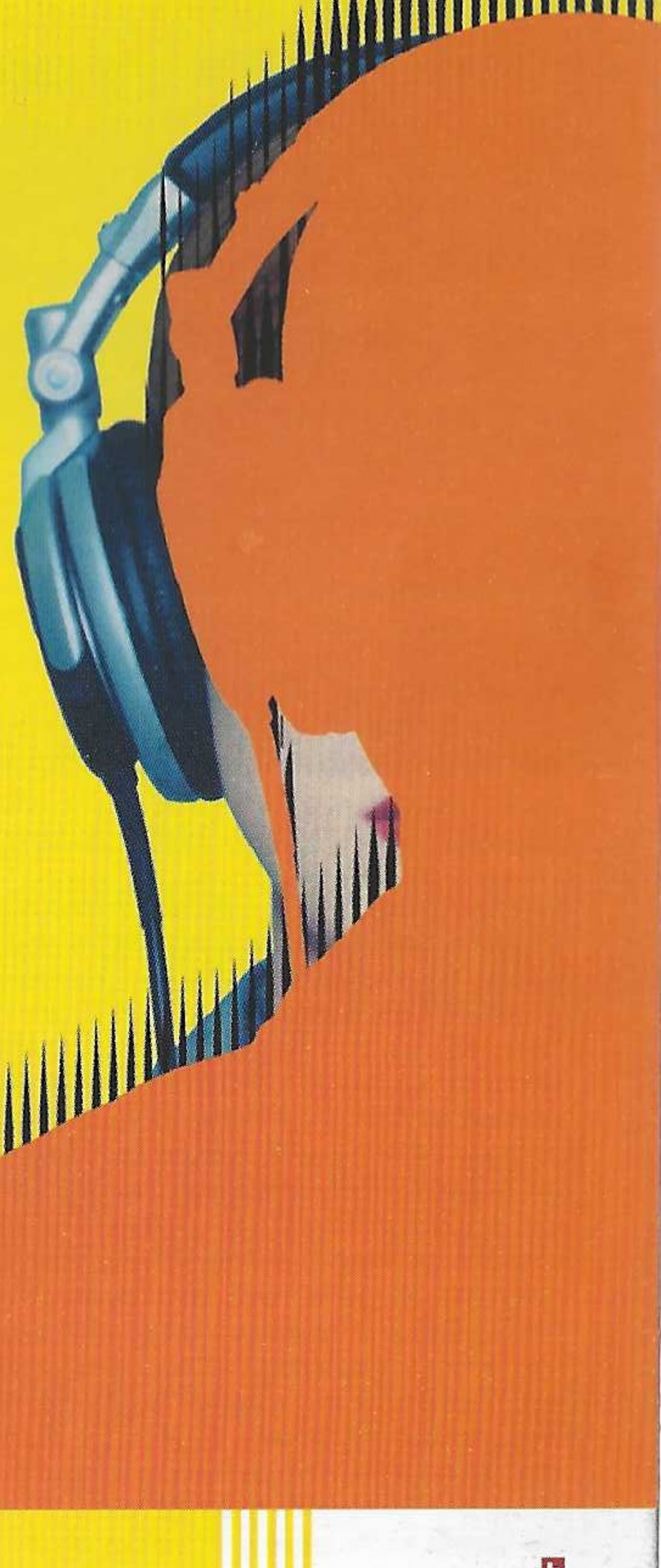

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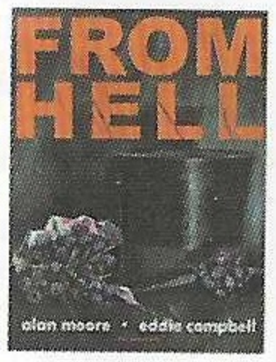


'Modulations: A History of Electronic Music - Throbbing Words On Sound'
Edited by Peter Shapiro
(Caipirinha)

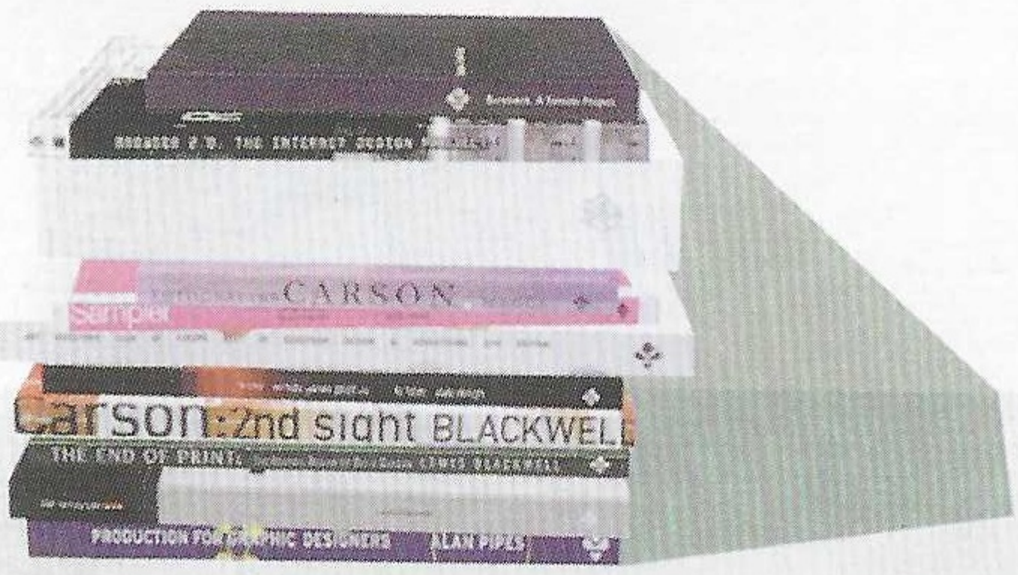
In 1998, a documentary feature film was released by a small production company in New York that quickly became the most essential viewing for anyone with even a passing interest in dance music and the culture that has grown up around it. Modulations, directed by Lara Lee of Caipirinha Productions was, and is superb. No film, documentary or otherwise has managed to capture the spirit of dance music so successfully. And certainly, no film has explored the genesis of dance music and how it is fundamentally a child of our technological times. So, how does the book rate in comparison?

The theme of the film, the effect electronic music has had on popular culture is explored in the book through a series of essays. Editor Peter Shapiro, (freelance journalist with Spin and Wire amongst others) has a huge input in this book. He was also 'the film's encyclopedia' according to Lee, so in many ways this is his chance to shine.

An excellent team of writers such as Simon Reynolds and Kodwo Eshun (who were interviewed in the film) get to grips with themes and genres: Musique Concrete, Krautrock, Disco, Post Punk, House, Hip Hop, Techno, Jungle, Ambient, Downtempo and finish up with an essay on technology with a subheading 'Analog Fetishes and Digital Futures.' As if that didn't have us all terribly excited, there are numerous sidebars on the likes of Afro Futurism, Gabba and Dub. There are also many transcribed interviews from the film, the most interesting of which are with Can (Krautrockers), Teo Macero (Miles Davis's producer) and Alvin Toffler (futurist writer who had a big influence on Juan Atkins). If anyone got left out of this, they're probably pretty upset.

The book's thread is formed around the idea that the avant garde has trickled down (or trickled up), influencing dance music and popular culture. Sometimes they can take themselves a little too seriously, but generally their idealism and humour are convincing. Their strength, however, lies in their ancillary exploration of how technological and electronic advances facilitated much dance music production. As Irmin Schmidt of Can commented in the transcribed interview: 'in actuality, the most inventive way to use a synthesizer is to misuse it. That's what we've done. That's what a lot of techno musicians do now. The French call it deconstruction.' The weakness of the book seems to be that it should have been published two years ago. Some of the essays that attempt to bring the music up to date on a contemporary level such as Kodwo Eshun's 'The Reinvention of House' fall short simply because they seem to have been written quite a while ago. Certainly this book was a long time in gestation. But it's not the worst complaint, particularly because the focus is on what the music has already achieved and how it has already been revolutionary in so many aspects. It also leaves the future open to suggestions. While parts of the book such as the panels might leave you feeling slightly unfulfilled, overall the book is not weakened by its comprehensiveness and a distinct love and understanding of the subject in hand emanates. Dance music may be all grown up but it's still a lot of fun.

WORDS> Kate Butler



'From Hell'
by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell
(Knockabout)

The first six chapters of From Hell were originally published in the excellent (and eventually banned) small press horror comic anthology Taboo issues Two through Seven from 1989 until 1992, building atmospherically over those irregular yet much anticipated issues. The story was abruptly brought to a halt when Taboo was finally laid to rest with issue Nine in 1995. An attempted re-publication of From Hell was aborted a couple of years later, but in 1999 Eddie Campbell Comics managed to publish the complete story in 16 parts. I held off, I wanted the story in a single volume and towards the end of 2000 Knockabout published this huge (300 plus pages) trade paperback. Now the story can be told in full.

We all know about Jack the Ripper don't we? Or do we? There are numerous theories (many of them conspiratorial in nature) and guesses as to the reasons for the murders and the identity of the killer or killers. these range from royalty to qualified surgeons to immigrants and even performing Indians. Channel 4 recently produced evidence that pointed towards an American con-man and doctor named Tumblety.

Moore and Campbell have taken the line that the Royal Surgeon Dr William Gull murdered the four prostitutes in Whitechapel after they had sent a blackmail letter to Walter Sickert, friend of Queen Victoria's son Prince Albert. Albert had fathered an illegal child by Annie Crook. Upon discovering the pregnancy, the four decided to try and obtain money from the Royal family to pay off their lodging and drinking debts. Victoria gave Gull permission to silence the blackmailers, and with the assistance of Netley, the Queen's coach driver, Gull set about his work, using his masonic contacts throughout the corrupt Police force to ensure its success.

Moore vividly portrays Inspector Abbeline as the hapless detective tasked with bringing the perpetrator to justice, not realising just how complicated and arcane the powers are that he is up against. Abbeline and Sickert slowly piece together the conspiracy but have no option but to remain silent, pensioned off. Recognising they are too small a part of the puzzle to solve anything. Moore creates totally believable and complex characters (a result of his exhaustive researches into the subject), enhancing them with extensive notes in the appendices which are absolutely vital and must be read simultaneously with the actual story panels themselves.

Moore's explanatory notes bring to life the London of the late nineteenth century supplying the reader with fascinating anecdotes and detail about the architecture, roads, history; all implying a magical resonance and hidden symbolism in the very stones and bones of London. Campbell's truly stunning black and white line-drawn depictions of the city, it's filth and stink, its people and its secret geometry slowly erode at you, eventually you can feel the grime and smell the air, taste the despair, sweat and alcohol of the terrorised Whitechapel area.

But it's not that simple. Moore brings the story full-circle as Gull's occult/masonic beliefs ensure the murders take on a significance that only others in similar positions of hidden power would recognise. As Gull passes from this earth, locked away in an insane asylum he traverses time and space appearing to other infamous killers of more recent times, perhaps inspiring, whispering and influencing them in their future actions. (I bet these scenes won't be in the forthcoming film). And there's so much more, the letters from Jack himself (which ended with the phrase 'From Hell'); scapegoats murdered to ease the public furore; forbidden and complicated relationships; incredibly powerful murder scenes; insanity combined with massive intelligence and a knowledge so esoteric it becomes supernatural.

Moore and Campbell must have been there.

WORDS> Mathew Riley

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MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES

Wandering around Islington of a Sunday afternoon, with its farmers' markets, antiques shops and sedate village-like air, it is easy to imagine a London before the live/work spaces and dot.com companies that now populate the area. A similar sense of home-grown freedom and subtle understatement also runs through the output of the small, but perfectly formed, Memphis Industries imprint.

Working from a modest North London office, 25-year-old boss Ollie Jacob has no pretentions to being anything other than a cottage industry saying: "Basically, I worked in music promotions down in Brighton for quite a while, but while I was doing that I always wanted to run my own label, to sign artists and put out the sort of really good music that people are making in their bedrooms and otherwise probably wouldn't get heard. It's all about us all doing something we really like and can be proud of."

And it is this unassuming, yet equally uncompromising, attitude that gives Memphis Industries its distinctive personality. With a roster including Dan Berridge's Broadway Project, Andy Dragazis's Blue States and until recently Ollie himself as La Mouche; the label's sound fuses electronic atmospherics with earthy acoustic textures and a tactile indie-influenced flavour. "I think the way our identity has come about is through all the people involved sharing similar musical backgrounds," Ollie explains. "We're all old indie kids who spent our formative years reading NME and listening to guitar bands. I mean, I've got more affinity with bands like My Bloody Valentine than most 'dance music', but we've all been there and lost it in fields a few years ago, so that all comes through in what we do. To be honest one of the biggest influences on me starting up was Sarah Records, an indie label run off a kitchen table pretty much, who put out stuff by bands like The Fieldmice who were probably one of the most appalling groups to ever commit music to vinyl. After hearing them I just thought if they can do it, then why can't I ?! I wanted to combine the best of everything I'm into. I was never really looking for a label sound as I just want to work with artists who have a long-term future. The guys from Blue States and Broadway Project fit the bill because they're incredibly talented people."

In fact, the perfect example of the Memphis oeuvre comes in the shape of 'Compassion', Broadway Project's new album. In a market saturated with easy-listening, soundtrack-style meanderings, such disturbing samplescapes bring a welcome shiver to the spine. Contradictory moods of claustrophobia and ethereality flow through a noirish netherworld as swathes of baroque melody drift in an opiate haze over torrential rhythmic swells. As Dan Berridge began working as Broadway Project while suffering from the debilitating effects of M.E., the insidious tension lurking under each tingling hi-hat is curiously resonant. 'Compassion' is alternately foreboding and deeply touching, with a warmly human quality, especially evident in moments such as the sublime 'London Broken Heart', the unsettlingly beautiful 'Life Of A Refugee' and 'Femme Fatale'. Similarly, last year's 'Nothing Changes Under The Sun' by Blue States won rave reviews thanks to its blend of soaring guitars, wayward rhythm and the turbulent sirtaki inflections of the album's stand-out track, 'Your Girl'.

Both residents of the south coast, Andy and Dan regularly work with one another, cultivating a certain cosy friends and family environment. This ethos of collaboration also extends to a reciprocal remix arrangement between Memphis Industries and Yorkshire's Melodic records, so far resulting in Pedro contributing a truly gorgeous interpretation of 'The Beast' on Broadway Project's recent 'No Pain' single and Blue States offering a typically idiosyncratic take on Minotaur Shock's 'Motoring Britain'. "I really rate that label," Ollie reveals. "We've got quite a lot in common in terms of ethos, the way we do things and just the sort of people we are, so it works really well. We've just finished doing a joint Memphis and Melodic UK tour which was great fun."

And there is plenty more to come from Ollie and the rest of the team over the next few months. Singles from both Broadway Project and Blue States are due, entitled 'For The One' and 'Elios Therepia' respectively, while new signings Fort Lauderdale (previously heard on Worm Interface) are also set to release their debut 'Electric Hell's Angels' EP in April and the subsequent album 'Time Is Of The Essence' in May. So the future is looking bright for this compact and bijou operation. "Yeah, we've got quite a lot to look forward to," laughs Ollie. "As long as I can keep on working with great people and doing what I want to do, then I'm happy. The key words, as far as Memphis Industries is concerned, have always been quality and total self-indulgence . . .and that's got to be a good combination."

WORDS> Dave Stelfox

Gilles Peterson

Radio One missionary, basement jazz fondler, self-confessed spinner of 'wierdy records' and a bit of a nervous perfectionist. Overload talks to the man believed by many to be to be John Peel's natural successor, GILLES PETERSON.

It's a typically rainy winter night in the capital. A DJ shuffles amidst throngs of club-goers, record box in hand and hood over head, chatting to the flyer-kids, queue-jumpers and street cleaners. We've seen his journey there earlier that evening, his attempts in encouraging the passengers of a London bus to share St. Germain's *Rose Rouge* on his headphones. As the night deepens we see him again, placing white label twelves underneath the wipers of cars. This is a Radio One promotional ad and the DJ is Gilles Peterson - 'Musical Missionary'.

During the last five or so years, the 'Nation's Favourite' has begun to tackle the problems it encountered after the 'Blood On The Carpet' culling of its old guard. Daytimes bounced to Britpop, much to the annoyance of ageing rockers like the aptly named, baldness-defying Status Quo. New DJs were installed in night-time and weekend slots to bring the station up to date with (some of) the varied listening tastes of *'In-ger-land'* and the *'you-K'*. Which raised the issue of 'identification'. Would 'the kids' devour Mary Anne's mixes as millions of truckers had employed Adrian Juste's banality as their soundtrack to Stranraer? Would the records themselves be enough to hold an audience when they are made by the 'faceless' and played by DJs that don't feel the need to attempt shite jokes every other minute (barring Jules)?

"...it was bangin' hard - I mean really, really hard! I remember getting there and thinking 'no way'as I arrived with my box of weirdy records. Funnily enough, once I'd done it, nothing's frightened me since."

Enter GP. Bringing with him a radio history that began in his parents' garden shed, developed on the pirates, stuttered at Jazz FM (where according to some he was sacked for playing 'peace' records during the Gulf War) and peaked during three years at Kiss, he quickly built on his passionate London audience. Already he is viewed by many as being John Peel's natural successor at the station and certainly the parallels are there. If Peel is our ever-cool Uncle, curious and commited, dedicated to reaching the summit of his demotape mountain, Gilles is our streetwise cousin, arch and able, pieceing together the wonderfully weird and engagingly offbeat. A recent 'handover' between the two illustrated the point, with Peel complaining that Peterson plays his records at the correct speeds far too often. He promptly reduced 23 Skidoo to 33, and the pair chuckled like children - an 'in-joke' shared with millions. That's how identification works.

The immersion of jazz (forget the 'nu' bit) into Radio One's schedules has not been trouble free. A couple of years ago, programmers decided to broadcast Worldwide (Peterson's show) live from Space in Ibiza. It's unkown who decided to place him directly after 'techno' big cheese Carl Cox. "That still goes down as the most frightening experience of my life and I couldn't run away as it was live. He was just finishing this marathon, six hour, 'set of the year' kind of thing. Everyone's on their second or third pills and it was bangin' hard - I mean really, really hard! I remember getting there and thinking 'no way'as I arrived with my box of weirdy records. Funnily enough, once I'd done it, nothing's frightened me since. I've been on after rave DJ's in Frankfurt in massive warehouses, fucking everyone up with weird shit, but never anything like that night."

It would be wrong to label Peterson as just a 'jazz' DJ. In his youth he progressed through the black West End circuit, the suburban, white, 'soulboy' gatherings and the trendy soho set built around The Wag club all at once. His shows visit hip hop, afrobeat, drum n bass, downbeat, new world, r'n'b and house consistently. And, most surprisingly, after the demise of Dave Clarke's show and with the exception of the aforementioned Peel, he's possibly Radio One's foremost supporter of techno. His show championed Juan Atkins' 'Be Brave', Super_Collider's 'Darn Cold Way Of Loving', Detroit Grand Pubahs' 'Sandwiches' and Theo Parrish's 'Smile' amongst many others. "Theo Parrish is one of the most interesting aspects of black American music right now. There's that ghetto techno minimalist sound that I particularly like in him. I love Moodymann as well, obviously, but Theo has it right for me. He avoids that cheesy saxophone nonsense the others fall into sometimes, it's black music to the core with tonnes of soul. I also thought the Pole album was one of the records of last year. Techno dub minimalist noise! Jeff Mills and Richie Hawtin represent the more intellectual, literary, scientific sound of the music. Perhaps more than any other form, when you got to Detroit you realise why that music comes from there. Same with Chicago, they are such different cities."

For all of the many talents that Gilles displays, whether in clubs or boardrooms, on compilations or broadcasts, his youthful enthusiasm remains obvious. As we chat his mind skips back and forth through genres and countries, from "back in the day" to "some point in the future", often underlining the centrality of happiness to success. "My biggest fight within myself when it comes to radio is to really enjoy it and that can be difficult when you've got so much to deal with. Sometimes it's just too much and you're exhausted and that's when you get nervous. I'm a complete perfectionist as well, so I put a lot of pressure on myself in anything I do - maybe it's an age thing, since I've been over thirty. I'm aware of the fact that I have a fantastic job and people rely on me and look to me as someone that can make a bit of a difference. It's more than just playing cool records, it' about getting exposure for great artists. The fact that I can go into my basement, get stoned and do a two-hour radio show that pleases so mnay people is fantastically satisfying."

Worldwide is broadcast Wednesday night/Thursday morning, midnight - 2am.

WORDS> Nick Doherty

MAX DULEY

"Tonight on Top Of The Pops I saw the most techno-sounding record ever,' recounts MAX DULEY. 'Can't remember what it was. It was terrible, terrible. For three minutes it sounded like very very BAD techno, from seven years ago - then it turned into Deep Forest or something. After that it became trance!"

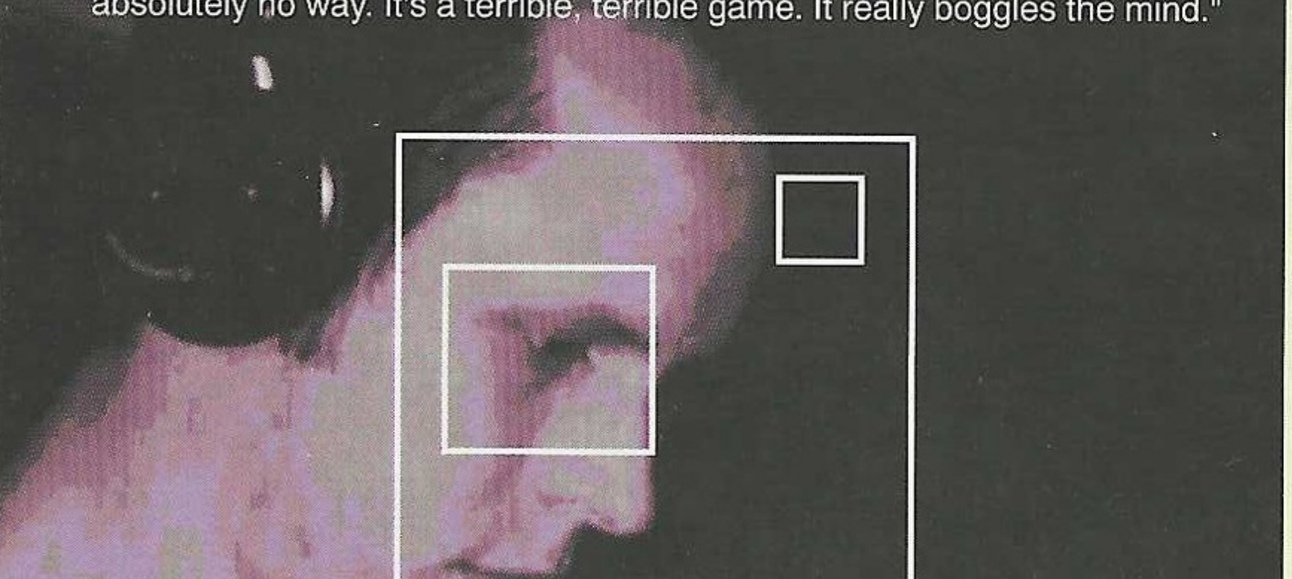
Duley, alongside Oliver Ho, Tommy Gillard, Rob Alcock, Andy McLaughlan and Dan March, is one of a close-knit group of West London producers whose cyclic electronic music (referred to by spotters and music journos as 'the Ealing sound') exists in a totally different universe to the current mainstream. "We're not a bunch of producers that just met up because they were living in the same area," tells Max when I ask about the formation of their prolific circle, "We're a bunch of friends who all started producing."

Having lived in Ealing practically all is life his musical ancestry closely matches that of flatmate Oliver Ho, since the pair formed a friendship at the age of fourteen. When his productions debuted on Ho's Meta imprint in '98 (Meta 003) Max believed their styles to be at "a point of convergence". Indeed, many assumed his name a moniker for the label boss, refusing to believe Max existed. But following a flurry of well-received releases on labels such as Dust Traxx subsidiary Hi-Octane and Steve Bicknell's Cosmic ID (and also two labels of his own) there no doubt at all that Maxwell Duley is alive, well and er, living in Ealing.

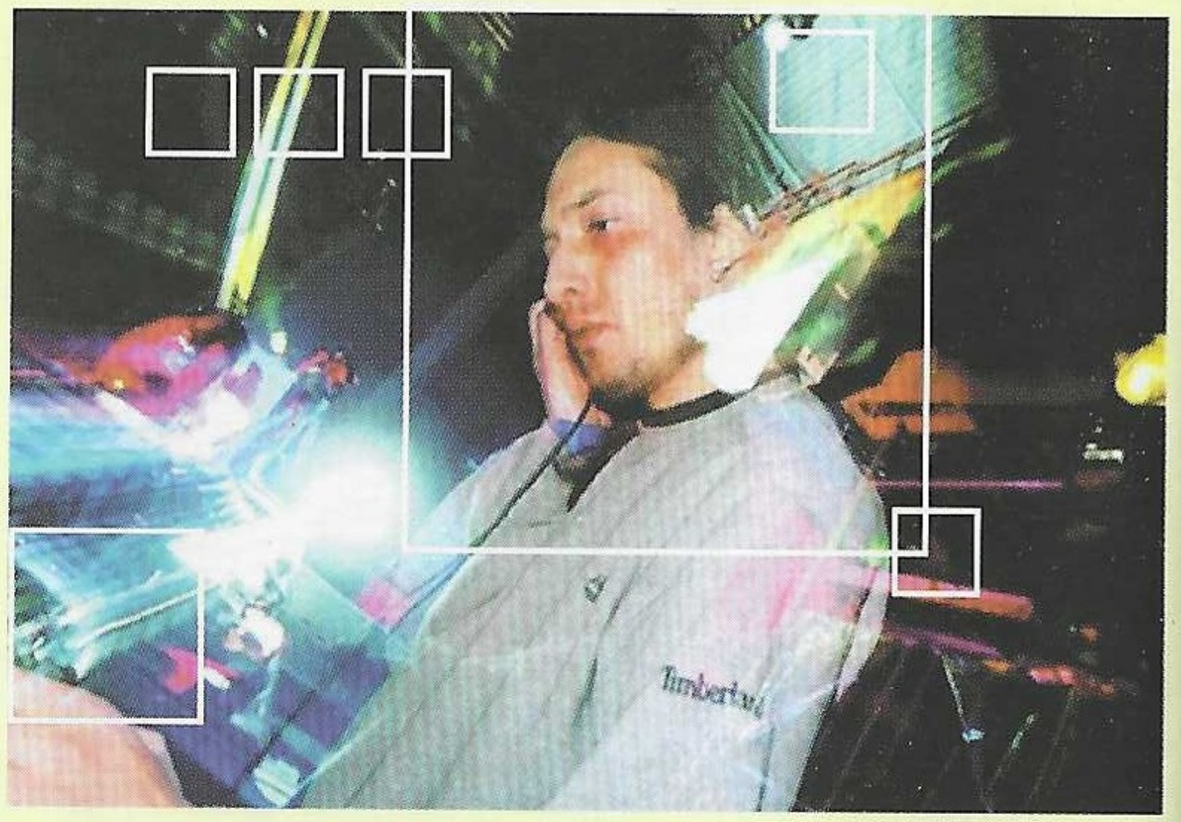
His style of dark, twisted and very tonal dancefloor music caught the ear of DJ Rush who subsequently lined up an EP release for Max on his Kne Deep imprint. It was soon after taking up the lanky jackmaster's offer that Max decided to set up both his Arc and Arc(ane) projects. "It was basically a case of deciding that I was going to do two labels. I can put slightly more banging stuff out on Arc and the deeper, more surreal stuff on Arc(ane). I always wanted to make sure there was the scope for quite hard stuff as well as the deeper stuff - which is essentially the direction I want to work towards."

Though DJing for eight years, it is only now he feels properly prepared to do so, armed with his own sonic arsenal. "I like to play tracks that have structure" he comments. " I don't necessarily want to mix one record in thirty seconds after another record, because you might miss the whole point of the record that I'm playing. Four minutes of music might be designed just to focus around a five second section of that record. If you just hear that five seconds section it's meaningless, if you hear the two minutes before that or the two minutes after that it's meaningless, but if you hear it all together it makes perfect sense."

So, if he's been living in London all his life, surely he'd like to play there more - perhaps get involved with a club night? "I think it's very difficult to put on a night in London because things just fall flat on their face so easily" he sighs. "I've been to so many club nights in London when you turn up and it's just a horrible venue, it's cold, it smells, the sound system is absolutely disgusting, and you just don't want to ever come back. It's not necessarily the fault of the promoters. Even the shit venues are expensive. I would never get involved with promoting, not in London - absolutely no way. It's a terrible, terrible game. It really boggles the mind."



WORDS> Franklyn J



MARCO LENZI

Since moving to London from Rome back in 1988 MARCO LENZI - techno producer, DJ, label manager and record shop boss - has become a prominent figure on the UK's capital's techno scene, largely due to his integral involvement with the city's legendary Silverfish Records and (following the demise of Silverfish in 1995) Eukatech Records, but increasingly for his productions, DJing and ever-evolving Molecular imprint.

We're sitting in a Covent Garden coffee bar. In Eukatech's shop next door the ceiling is sagging due to a burst pipe in the flat above, but with a plumber on route Marco Lenzi's concern quickly switches to the microphone I've just plonked on the table between the lattes and olives. "I have a smoker's voice" he comments giving the mic a cautious glance, "very 'urrrggg.'"

Marco first began experimenting with music making back in 1991, alongside Marco D'Arcangelo of Rephlex and Nature fame. Between them they established Molecular Recordings back in 1994. "We were partners for the first seven releases. He taught me quite a lot of things, such as how to use equipment," he explains. As with much of Molecular's multi-artist output, Marco's own techno productions are aimed squarely at the dancefloor, fusing abstract funky elements with solid workable rhythms using both digital and analogue means. "I make most of my sounds using a computer but only to produce sounds, not the whole track. I think the combination of analogue and digital together works very well. I don't like only analogue or only digital. There's something missing."

Marco sees his acquired spinning habit to be a natural consequence of working in a record shop environment for so long, viewing himself much more as a producer than a DJ. Despite only playing out regularly for the past three years, his confident mixing style has seen him DJing frequently across Europe and as far away as Tokyo's Liquid Rooms. "It's important to develop your own style," professes Marco. "There's no point imitating Jeff Mills because he is Jeff Mills - there's only one. So, you're only going to become second because you're imitating him."

DJ Bone, K. Hand, Chris Liebing and Inigo Kennedy are but a few of the production talents to contribute to Molecular's thirty-plus back catalogue spanning six years, and 2001 is already shaping up to be a busy time for the label. Jamie Bissmire (Space DJz) is working on a Molecular mix CD, whilst Ex-Advent collaborator Colin McBean makes a welcome return under his Halcyon Daze guise with two new EPs and ("hopefully") an album by the end of the year. A bit of a loop-a-holic, Lenzi is also set to release a third volume of 'Bio Molecular Rhythms' - a series of CD compilations also featuring 100 wave file loops for use by producers. "There are a few records I've noticed that have come out using loops from them," he tells. "I still want to release a CD with 1000 loops on waveform for sampling purposes - Molecular CD ROM 01. I've got 10 gigabytes of loops!" A final volume of Molecular's popular pure locked groove DJ tool series is also in the pipeline, although there's a bit of a twist. "Lock Grooves number three will probably be the last one we are going to do. All my friends from Rome want to do one, but they don't do straight techno. People like Marco Passarani and Marco D'Arcangelo."

So, there's plenty to be getting on with then? "If you want to achieve something you've got to push that little bit further," he smiles. "Monday morning, ten o'clock I'm at the office." If only I was.

WORDS> Theresa Green

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